

THE *Gal 10 66f*
DOCTRINE
OF

ENDLESS TORMENTS,

FREELY and IMPARTIALLY DEBATED,

Inquiring what CREDIBILITY it hath from

HISTORY, ANALOGY, or SCRIPTURE.

WITH A

DISCUSSION

ON THE

ORIGIN of EVIL.

IN FOUR BOOKS.

*What could have been done MORE to my Vineyard, that I
have NOT done in it?* ISAIAH, v. 4.

By JOHN MAUD, M.A. *K*

Vicar of St. Neots, Huntingdonshire;

And Chaplain to His GRACE

The DUKE of MANCHESTER.

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MDCCLV.

THE
DOCTOR

ENDLESS TONIC

THE GREAT REMEDY FOR
ALL THE AFFECTIONS OF THE
LUNGS AND THROAT

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**TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE**

Sir Dudley Ryder, Knt.

**Lord Chief Justice of His Majesty's
Court of King's Bench.**

My Lord,

THOUGH I can by no Means
plead Ignorance of your Lord-
ship's great Unwillingness to receive any
Addresses of this Nature, I have, never-
theless,

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theless, for once, adventured to hazard
 your Lordship's Displeasure in this Re-
 spect: And, as this, my Lord, is the
 only Thing in which I should ever dare
 to disobey you, I hope, upon this Ac-
 count, you will be pleased to Pardon
 me for putting this Treatise under your
 Lordship's Protection. I confess, my
 Lord, I do not so much wonder at your
 Lordship's Disapprobation of Addresses
 from the Press, when I call to Mind that
 your Lordship's penetrating Observati-
 ons of Men and Books, cannot but have
 given you a just Indignation at the *Ful-*
some common-place Style of *modern De-*
dications, which seem to be rather cal-
 culated to flatter *the Personage address-*
ed, than to advance the sinking Cause
 of Truth and Virtue. Not, my Lord,
 but there are some such exalted Charac-
 ters, where Silence would be rude Af-
 fection, and as great a Punishment, as
 to be forced to shut one's Eyes amidst a
 grand Collection of the *choicest* Curio-
 sities, or when placed upon the Summit
 of

DEDICATION.

of the most delightful Hill, surrounded with all the captivating Charms of Nature, *and these by BROWNLOW's liberal Hand adorn'd.* Upon this very Summit, my Lord, I have spent some agreeable Hours, and were I to be denied the Pleasure, during any future Time I may chance to spend in that *sweet Retirement*, of so much as once casting my Eyes around me, *great* as this Punishment would be, it is *greater* to be enjoined Silence, when the Lord of that delightful * Spot is the agreeable Theme. But as I am no Stranger to your Lordship's Delicacy in this Respect, I must quit a Subject I could dwell upon with Pleasure, to say something where Silence would be deemed very excusable. But you have a Right, my Lord, to be acquainted with the Nature and Tendency of a Book, which humbly solicits the Acceptance and Patronage of your Lordship. One principal Design, my Lord, of the following

DEDICATION

ing Sheets, is to bring to an *amicable Issue*, those *furios* uncharitable Debates, concerning the *Eternity of future Punishments*, and the *Origin of Evil*, which have hitherto been carried on with such unwarrantable Zeal on *one Side*, and with such irreverent Reflections upon the Deity on the *other*, as cannot but afford Matter of Smeer to the *unbelieving Herd*. And though it may be deemed Impertinent, as well as out of Character, to trouble your Lordship with the Squabbles of vindictive Ecclesiastics; yet, as these fiery Debates have always been attended with the same Mischief to the State as to the Church, upon this Account, my Lord, they merit the serious Attention of every Statesman. For your Lordship need not be told how often the civil Sword hath been unsheathed in the Cause of religious Broils, and about Matters too of such an *indifferent* Nature, as a wise Man would blush to be engaged in, either on one Side or the other. But
our

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our *present Controversy*, my Lord, is upon Subjects of the most interesting Nature: For it can never be a Thing indifferent, whether the Sentence of future Eternal Misery will be pronounced upon almost *all* Mankind, or upon *none*. Neither can it appear, to any thinking Man, a Matter of *small* Consequence, whether the Origin of moral Evil be attributed to the immediate Act of him whose Goodness and Benevolence are *infinite*, or to some Imperfection in all *created* Existence, which even Divine Omnipotence could not remedy, unless the Deity could communicate Impeccability, Infallibility, and absolute Perfection to his Creatures, which is a Thing in its *own* Nature impossible. And that our Controversy, my Lord, might be put upon such a Footing as is most likely to conciliate the Minds of our Adversaries, and thereby put the best and shortest End to this long debated Subject; I have, my Lord, very frankly quitted
some

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some *Old Posts*, which are certainly not tenable with Safety. For, if we act, my Lord, like some rash, indiscreet Commander, and take upon us to maintain too large a Field, the Enemy will certainly surprize us in some of our *Out-Lines*, and be apt to conclude from the Weakness of *these*, that our very Center and Foundation might be sap't with Ease.

AND, lest the following Treatise, my Lord, should offend the polite Reader, on Presumption of the Gloominess attending the Subject, it is cast into an historical Form, and presents him with a Survey of human Nature, in some of the most interesting Events, from the Formation of Man, down to the Silencing of the Prophets. And in this Survey of human Nature, and of the Divine Proceedure, with respect to his *earthly* Probationers, we find, my Lord, the Deity all along exhibits such a beautiful *Portrait* of himself, in which Justice and Mercy are blended together,

emot 2 with

DEDICATION.

with such *Divine Art*, as neither, at any Time, to terrify his Creatures, nor to encourage them in Sin: We behold, as we travel along, the Almighty always ready to soften Justice with *interposing* Mercy, and to mitigate the *Letter* and seeming Rigour of the Law, by Mildness and Equity. And as this, my Lord, affords so fine a Pattern to *those* whom Providence sees fit to exalt to the highest Seat of Judgment, to whom, my Lord, could I with greater Propriety inscribe this striking Picture of the Divine Being, than to one whose critical Knowledge of the Laws of the Realm, must be most intimately acquainted with *whatever* is rigorous in the *Letter* of these Laws, and whose native Love of Equity and Moderation, will readily interpose to remedy and mitigate *every Thing* that is so?

I flatter myself, my Lord, that if there should be any Thing in the following Sheets, not altogether unworthy your Lordship's Notice, it will in
some

DEDICATION.

some Degree excuse my Presumption
for inscribing them to a LORD CHIEF
JUSTICE OF ENGLAND, and that
your Lordship will grant me the
Honour of subscribing myself, with
becoming Duty,

Your Lordship's Obedient,

and most Faithful

Humble Servant,

St Neots,
July 19, 1755.

JOHN MAUD.

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I Thought it incumbent upon me to acquaint the Reader, that the following Treatise was ready for the Press, and most of it printed off, many Months ago: And my only Reason for delaying its Publication so long, has been owing to some Intelligence I received from my Correspondents in Town, acquainting me, that there were several Books in the Press relative to my Subject, which, in Compliance to the Advice of some particular Friends, I was willing to have a Sight of before I presented mine to the Public: Some, of these Books are now in Print: One, a Treatise entitled, The Scripture Doctrine of a Future State considered; Another, The great Love and Tenderness of God to his Creature Man: But, upon a Perusal of these, I found very little more relating to the Doctrine of Future Punishments, than what was formerly advanced by Origen: However, the Reader will find, as he passeth along, several Animadversions upon these, and other Abettors of Origen's Tenets concerning a Second Probation, &c. For as it was one principal Design of the ensuing Treatise, to rescue

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the Doctrine of Hell-Torments out of the Hands of the vindictive Zealot on the one Side, and to secure it from the avowed Contempt of the careless voluptuary on the other, I have all along endeavoured to establish this Sanction of the divine Law upon the very Principles of the Mercifordians themselves: And whoever is desirous of knowing what has been advanced in the most decent manner in Favour of the Mercifordian Scheme, he will meet with it in a Treatise published some Years ago by the worthy and learned Doctor Hartley, entitled, Observations on Man, &c. And as this Gentleman is by far the best and most rational Advocate that has publicly appeared in defence of the said Scheme, I presume, that if Doctor Hartley's Notions of Future Punishments, and a Second Probationary State, can be fairly proved to have no Foundation either in History or Analogy, it may be a likely Means to conciliate the Writers on that Side of the Question to the Principles laid down in the following Pages. And that the Reader may be able to judge of Doctor Hartley's Method of Argumentation in Support of his Opinion of a State of Probation after Death, and of the Uses with which this Gentleman apprehends such a second Probation would be attended, let the following Passage be cited: "It has been observed all along, in the Course of this Work, that all the Evils that befall either Body or Mind, in this State, have a Tendency to improve one or both. " If they fail in producing a peculiar appropriated immediate good Effect, they must however necessarily tend to the Annihilation of that Self, carnal,

" or

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“ or spiritual, gross or refined, which is an insuperable Bar to our Happiness in the pure Love of God, and of his Works. Now (adds this candid Writer) if we reason at all concerning a Future State, it must be from Analogies taken from this. We ought therefore to judge, that the Evils of a Future State will have the same Tendency to, and final Cause, as those of this Life, viz. to meliorate and perfect our Natures, and to prepare Men for ultimate unlimited Happiness in the Love of God and of his Works.”

Now the Conclusions of this worthy Gentleman are certainly just, upon Supposition the Premises he draws them from were Matters of Fact. But alas, it is so far from being a Matter of Fact, “ That all the Evils that befall either Body or Mind in this Life, tend to improve one or both,” or are any ways instrumental in mortifying and subduing (for this I presume is what Doctor Hartley means by Annihilating) the carnal and vain Imaginations of Man, that these Evils have, upon many, quite a contrary Effect. It is fully shewn in the ensuing Treatise, and from a great Variety of Historical Facts traced down from the Formation of Man to the present Times, that there have been some such perverse, invincible Sinners, in every Period of Time, upon whom the Evils, or Calamities of this Life have been so far from working the least Reformation, that they have frequently grown more hardened the Moment their Calamities were removed. And as this

* Dr. Hartley's *Observations on Man*. Part II. Chap. iv. Sect. v.

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*this has been the Case, not with Individuals only, but with almost whole Nations, it is from "Analogy, taken from this Life" (which is Doctor Hartley's own Method of Reasoning) * that I have deduced the Necessity of the Tremendous Sanction, as being to some invincible Sinners the great fine quanon. So that I have the Happiness to agree with the candid and benevolent Doctor in that Proof of Future Punishments drawn from Analogy, though we differ in our Premises: whether his, or mine as stated in the following Pages, are most agreeable to Truth, and to the Conduct of human Nature in all Ages, is freely submitted to the Decision of the Reader.*

** See his Works just cited.*

A SUMMARY



A
S U M M A R Y
O F T H E
C O N T E N T S
O F T H E
F I R S T B O O K.



S E C T I O N I. Page 1

CONTAINS a Retrospect of Man before his Original Glory was eclipsed.

The Necessity of extending our Survey of human Nature so far back.

The various Opinions of Rabbinical, and other Expounders of the sacred Code, concerning that divine Image in which Man was at first created.

What is apprehended to be the most rational Meaning of that glorious Image, stamped upon original Man.

The absolute Impossibility of annihilating that divine Principle, at first breathed into Man by the great Father of Spirits; with the rapturous Consolation which this joyous Truth must afford to injured Innocence, and Virtue oppressed.

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S E C T. II. P. 21

Contains an Account of original Man, after he was placed in the Garden of *Eden*, that *Theatre* of captivating *Delights*; and put in ample Possession of his new erected *Empire*.

The mistaken Constructions, as the Author apprehends, of *Gen. ii. 5.* obviated: And the true Import of keeping the Garden, clearly stated.

Shewing that our great Progenitor, even in his princely State of unbounded Dominion, had no Licence to be wholly unemployed:

But that he had a double Task enjoined him, one relating to his lower Faculties, in the Cultivation and Improvement of his earthly Domains; the other, to the Exercise of his exalted Reason, free Agency, and Circumspection in the Preservation of himself, and his sweet Abodes, from the Ravages of a certain *Enemy*, which he was given to understand was somewhere lurking in Ambush, and might possibly try to dispossess him of his beauteous Inheritance.

This previous Notice, even before the Interdiction of the *Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil*, an Argument of God's great Goodness to *Adam*, and renders him more culpable for not taking Notice of the merciful Premonition.

S E C T. III. P. 35

Contains some Conjectures relating to the interdicted Tree.

Adam inexcusable for meddling with it, be the Thing forbidden what it would; because he both knew what the Thing forbidden was, and was apprised of the Misery it would expose him to, in Case he should transgress the Command of his Creator.

God's Wisdom manifested in *Adam's* Free Agency.

The Original *Pact* between God and Man, stated and explained:

Proving from thence, that *Adam*, after a certain probationary Period, was to have been translated from his earthly

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earthly Paradise, into the purer Regions of God's heavenly Habitation.

The different Deaths to which *Adam*, after he forfeited his Faith and Allegiance in God, was rendered obnoxious,

One Kind of Death instantly seizing upon Man, the Moment he lost his Innocence; another gradually stealing upon him; and Death Eternal, his future Sentence; unless infinite Wisdom and Goodness should find out the gracious Means of recovering undone Man, and put it again in his Power to live, and be eternally Happy.

The Divine Procedure justified in *Adam's* Expulsion out of Paradise:

Shewing that *Adam*, after he fell, could not have been any longer Happy in the pure Groves of *Eden*, had his Maker suffered him still to dwell there.

His Expulsion founded in the very Nature of Things, and not, as some assert, the mere arbitrary Act of God.

Proving from hence, that there are some Men who would be Miserable even in Heaven, unless the Almighty should alter the Nature and Constitution of Things.

This not to be expected.

S E C T. IV. P. 57

Shewing that the tragical Effects of *Adam's* Transgression, quickly appeared in Covetousness, Hypocrisy, Envy and Murder, those Four horrid Crimes, which were all united in the Person of the first Man born of a Woman.

The Character of the two Brothers,

The Reason of *Abel's* Offering being accepted, and *Cain's* rejected with Indignation.

The Necessity of the grand Atonement prefigured by *Abel's* Offering.

In the Non-acceptance of *Cain's* Offering, we have the most early Caution against want of Sincerity in the solemn Duties of Religion.

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That Covetousness is the Root of all Evil; appears from the History of *Cain*.

Cain's Banishment for Murder, a fearful Proof of God's great Indignation against this shocking Crime.

This Punishment of *Cain*, in being eternally banished from the Presence of that Being, in whom alone is Happiness and true Joy, is left upon everlasting Record, to be a merciful Warning to all future Ages.

S E C T. V. P. 70

Shewing that the atrocious Crime of *Cain*, in murdering his Brother, paved the Way to all those Enormities, which afterwards ensued in the old World.

Who are to be understood by the *Sons of God*; and by the *Daughters of Men*, as so emphatically contradistinguished in the sacred Code.

That *Cain*, by the Murder of his Brother, lost the Right of Primogeniture, and every other natural and civil Privilege.

These Rights and Privileges devolved to *Seth*, and his Posterity.

Hence, the Descendants of *Adam* were divided into different Houses quite opposite, both in Matters of Polity and Religion.

Those two original Houses were that of *Cain*, and that of *Seth*, whom God gave to *Adam* instead of murdered *Abel*.

The Mark set upon *Cain*, what it was; and that by the Appointment of infinite Wisdom, it became both his Punishment and his Preservation.

The House of *Seth* a Theocracy, in which the pure Worship of God was, for some Time, carefully preserved.

That of *Cain* a Demonocracy:

The House of *Seth* at last fell off from God.

The Method to reclaim the House of *Cain* was by a regular Succession of commissioned Preachers.

These venerable Antediluvian Preachers eight in Number, from *Enos* to *Noah*, reckoned inclusively.

The exalted Characters of some of them.

That

That these great Champions of Truth incessantly called upon the Sinners of the old World to repent, and appease that Wrath of Heaven, which had been so long hovering around them.

Noah the last commissioned Preacher to the Antediluvians. He forewarns them of approaching Vengeance, tells them how long their Day of Grace would be.

They slight his repeated Admonitions. Nor did that miraculous Longevity of the Antediluvians, meant on Purpose as a merciful Trial upon them, lead them to Repentance, but confirmed them in more hardened Profaneness.

They scoffed at Noah the great Preacher of Righteousness, laughed at his solemn Apparatus in the Affair of the Ark, and set at nought his most tender Remonstrances.

S E C T VI. P. 101

Shewing the Deluge to be a Punishment, which the Antediluvians called down upon themselves, in Spite of God's Mercy.

It was no more than a necessary Judicial Vengeance. Shewing what we are to understand by necessary Judicial Punishments.

These become so, when every Overture of Love and Compassion is perpetually slighted.

This was the Case with the Antediluvians.

They grew hardened by those very Methods, meant in Mercy to reclaim them.

The Justice of the divine Being vindicated in his Procedure with the Men of the old World.

The invincible Perverseness of the Antediluvians, who were Proof against all the Expedients of Heaven, repeated (and repeated too upon the same individual Persons) for near a Thousand Years continuance, but all to no Purpose, is as strong a Proof as could be left upon Record, that some Men are not to be reclaimed from Sin in any finite Duration.

That God did not proceed to take Vengeance upon the Sinners of the old World, till both his Mercy and his

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Justice, became the Subject of Ridicule and Contempt. That it was then high Time for the Almighty to shew his Arm. In the Destruction of the old World by the Deluge, and in the History of those Crimes, which forced Heaven to act this deep Tragedy, there is a standing Lesson of Instruction, and of the utmost Importance to all future Ages.



B O O K II.

S E C T. I. P. 118

EXHIBITS a still further and stronger Proof of the Inefficacy of finite Expedients, in the *Babel* Enterprize. Illustrates the sacred History of this notable Affair. The Characters of the Principals concerned in this vain-glorious Attempt. The Origin of Arbitrary Power, and Tyrannical Government. The End proposed in building the Tower of *Babel* considered, its Absurdity shewn, together with the Sin and Folly of that ridiculous Enterprize. This Piece of sacred History, an excellent Caution to the present Age.

S E C T. II. P. 136

Shifts the Scene of Action from the Plain of *Shinar* to the Banks of the *Nile*. The Origin of the *Egyptians*, the Character of the *Aborigines* Inhabitants of the Land of *Ham*. The Character of *Pharaoh*. His hardness of Heart, and invincible Stubbornness, both his Crime and Punishment. The Wisdom and Justice of God remarkably exhibited in the *Egyptian* Judgments. An Illustration of the commonly received Opinion relating to Predestination, from the Historical Account of *Pharaoh*, and God's Preference of

of *Jacob*, the Younger, to *Esaú* the Elder Brother. The Doctrine of the Unity and Supremacy of *God*'s God manifestly published in the *Egyptian* Story; and not only to the Inhabitants of the Land of *Egypt*; but to all the Earth, *Egypt* being at that Time a Place of universal Resort.

SECT. III. P. 161

Shifts the Survey of human Nature from the *Gentile* World, to the *selected* People. Human Nature still the same. The incredible Stupidity of the *Israelites*, at their first Departure out of *Egypt*. Their gross Abuse of Reason, for not making better Use of the Miracles they had so lately seen wrought before their Eyes in *Pharaoh*'s Court; and in that memorable and total Overthrow at the *Red-Sea*. The Behaviour of this People much the same after, as before the Promulgation of the *Mosaic* Law. The most striking Miracles of little or no Use, when Reason is eclipsed, and these supernatural Methods of Conviction once become common. Eternal Happiness will never be intruded upon *God*'s Creatures, whether they will or no. The Heinousness of advancing such a dangerous and absurd Opinion.

SECT. IV. P. 170

Further illustrates the invincible Folly and Perverseness of some Individuals in the Conduct of the *Israelites* at *Taberah*, and at *Kibroth-Hattaavah*. *Aaron* and *Miriam*'s Treatment of *Moses*. *God* himself vouchsafes to appear in the Cause and Defence of his envied Ambassador. The exalted Favours to which he was admitted, above every other Man of *God*; his meek and humble Deportment, notwithstanding his being so highly distinguished by Heaven, a standing Pattern to the venerable Fathers and great Guardians of the *Christian* Church. The Behaviour of the *Israelites* at their Station at *Kadesh*. The Twelve Explorers sent from thence to survey the *Land of Promise*.

Ten

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Ten bring up a *false* and *evil* Report. Upon this, the People are meanly intimidated; want to return back to the *rainfed Banks* of the *Nile*, under a Leader of their own Choice, in Contempt of the great Legislator, and of God's mighty Wonders hitherto wrought for their Preservation. The Crime, Stupidity, and Impracticability of such a *rash* Adventure. Neither the Dastards who brought up the evil Report of the *Promised Land*, nor those who gave Credit to it, were suffered to go in and enjoy that beautiful Inheritance. Whether the Exclusion of those murmuring Rebels from the *Land of Promise* (to the *Jew* always a Type of the Heavenly *Jerusalem*) was not to *them*, and to *all* other incorrigible Sinners, a fearful Type of being eternally excluded from the *Jerusalem* which is above, a *Hint* not altogether unworthy of Notice. Why the *Israelites* were (even after they were within the Confines of their promised Inheritance) doomed to wander forty Years in the Deserts of *Arabia*. The Expediency of an universal Mediator evinced in the constant Practice of *Moses*, whenever his People were threatened with utter Destruction.

S E C T. V. P. 187

Acquaints us with the true Origin of Rebellion in the State, and Schism in the Church. The Names of the Principals concerned; the true Motives of their Discontents. These (when not coolly examined) very plausible to the Bulk of the People. The Prudence of the *Jewish* Legislator, in that memorable Contest betwixt him and his *mutinous* Opposers. The remarkable Punishment inflicted upon those seditious Men. This judicial Punishment, as it was promiscuously and indiscriminately inflicted upon all that appertained to the principal Conspirators, Wives, little Children, &c. a strong Argument of a *future* State of Retribution. Why the present Life is not a State of equal Distribution of Rewards and Punishments.

S E C T.

Shews in a fuller Point of Light, that the Doctrine of a Future State, is manifestly deducible from the whole of the Procedure, relating to the Promulgation of the Divine Law, as well as to the Treatment of the Legislator himself. Reasons why the Doctrine of a Future State was not more openly divulged in the *Hebrew* Revelation, or written Institutes of *Moses*. This Interesting Doctrine proved from the well-attested History of Man, in every Period of Time since the Creation; from whence it is evident, that no Kind of *Finite Expedients* have ever been able to work upon some Individuals. The Proof of this momentous Truth, as deducible from the Doctrinal and Historical Part of the Law, by far more obvious and convincing to the Bulk of Mankind, than those other Proofs drawn either from the present unequal Distribution of Things, the Consideration of Man's being a Rational, and as such an accountable Creature. Reason for superadding revealed Religion to the primary Law of Nature. The Books of *Moses* actually revealed by God: This clearly proved. The sacred Oracles, the same now as when first revealed: The *Jews* had no Inclination to obliterate or corrupt them; or, supposing they had, they would have been providentially restrained. Had the Scriptures of the first Testament been at all corrupted before our Saviour's Time, he would have detected it; if since, it would have been in such Passages as most strongly condemn the *Jews*, at this very Day, for rejecting the Messiah. An Account of the *Masoretic* Criticisms. The Tremendous Sanction clearly demonstrated from the Conduct of human Nature under the Theocracy; still further evinced from the private History and Character of the *Jewish* Legislator.

A SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

B O O K III.

P O I N T S out the Reasons why God took the Government of Church and State into his own immediate Hands. The Theocracy meant to be an *experimental* Trial upon human Nature. The People's Conduct under this Form of Government, to be a standing Proof to future Ages of the Inefficacy of the greatest *Finite* Expedients. The next Form of Government an Aristocracy, or Divine Republic. How long the People lived under it. The Office, Power, and Election of the *Hebrew* Judges. Their Power not equal to regal Dominion. The People's Behaviour under the Judges. Their Conduct not altered much for the better after they had taken Possession of the *Promised Land*. Their stupid Inattention to their *own History*, and sudden falling off from the True God, a further Illustration of our *main Proposition*. Why every Man was suffered, for a while, to do what was Right in his *own Eyes*; and to be a *King* to himself.

S E C T. II. P. 237. Shews, from the Conduct of Man, under every Trial hitherto made upon him, consistent with human Liberty; that there is a certain contracted Perverseness in some Individuals, not to be subdued by any Kind of Punishments, any longer than their Punishments are repeatedly continued. The *Jewish* Story, by Change of Name, a true Picture of most other Nations. The *Halcyon Days* of the *Israelites*, seem to have been under the wise Administration of *Samuel*. The Folly and Crime of the *Jews* in asking them a King at any Time, especially at that particular Period, when they made this Demand, *Nay, but a King shall reign over us*. This Crime the more unpardonable, as it was wanting to take themselves from under the Government of Heaven, to live under the cruel Tyranny of a Democracy,

a Democracy, that being the Plan of Government under which all the *Gentile*, or *Heathen* World, at that dark Period, miserably groaned. The Falschood of the People's Plea for asking them a King. Their Punishment in having *Saul* set over them. *David*, and not *Saul*, was probably the Person designed to have been the first King of *Israel*. The true Import of his Character, as a Man after God's own Heart. The Force of Royal Example, exhibited in the Reign of Holy *David*. Still, great as it is, it was not powerful enough to weigh with all his Subjects,

Exhibits the most material Circumstances relating to *Solomon*. The Cause of his Seduction, and fatal Eclipse of his Glory. The Division of the Kingdom of *Israel*, threatened in this Prince's Life-time, fatally happened in the Reign of his Son. The various Revolutions in the Kingdom of *Israel*, from the impious Son of *Nebat*, down to *Hoseab* the Son of *Elab*. A short Account of these Princes, and the greater Turpitude of each (as they all knew by what solemn Conditions they held the Royal Charter) for not taking Warning by the tragical History of every preceeding Reign. Invincible Profaneness at last led ten Tribes of *Israel* captive into the different Parts of *Assyria*. Carries back the Reader from *Assyria* to the Holy City. A View of the Conduct of the Tribe of *Judah*. The Character of the Princes in the House of *David*, and Line of the *Messiah*. These, many of them, greatly superior to their kindred Princes of the Ten Tribes. The principal Reason of the Revolt of the House of *David*. The Princes of this House, as well as People, by far more culpable than the Kings of *Israel*. Idolatry the Evil Genius that hastened the Subversion of the Kingdom of *Jerusalem*. This stupid Sin, both the Crime and Punishment of the *Jews*. The Spirit of Idolatry, when once let into a Land, can hardly ever be wholly subdued. A View of the Holy City in Ruins. This tragical Prospect no improper Hint to *Britain*.

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S E C T. V. P. 295

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BOOK IV.

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OBVIATES that Objection against our Doctrine, from the supposed Difference betwixt the first and second Covenant: That the different Lot of good and bad Men in a Future State is, in Point of *Duration*, equal; shewn from the whole Tenor of Scripture, and the genuine Interpretation of *live* and *live again*. If these Terms are only to be understood of a finite Duration, the sacred Oracles are one *continued Lie*. The Absurdity, and Impiety of such an Interpretation. What the Christian Mediator has done, and *not* done, for the Redemption of fallen Man. All Men may avoid being eternally Miserable. This illustrated by a familiar Comparison.

S E C T. II. P. 358

Shews the Impossibility of reclaiming *some* kind of Sinners by any *finite* Expedients; whether by repeated Long-suffering, the present Rewards of Virtue, the eminent Distinction frequently made, (even in a miraculous Way) betwixt Virtue and Vice, or by those ineffable Joys that unerring Truth has promised, as the certain Reward of Virtue in a future State. Profane Men would deem Annihilation a Favour. Those Men greatly to blame, in a political Sense, who endeavour to inculcate the pernicious Notion of the irreclaimable Sinner's utter Annihilation. The Objections against our Doctrine, *as this Doctrine should be understood*, big with Absurdities. The Doctrine of endless Misery, as to some particular Objects, not barely founded upon *Scripture* Authority; but shewn from Analogy, and a great Variety of Historical Facts, to be what Logicians call the *fine qua non*.

S E C T. III. P. 370

Adduces some farther Proofs, shewing both the Certainty, Necessity, and temporal Advantages arising from a

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firm Belief of our Doctrine. No other Considerations of Force enough to keep Men within any tolerable Bounds of Decency. Judicial Punishments from Heaven, whether upon *Individuals*, or *whole Nations*, when once blown over, generally harden more than they reclaim. This fully verified in some Occurrences in this Kingdom, too recent to be forgotten. Since national Peace (treacherous as it ever appeared) was restored, national Impieties have broke out with greater Licentiousness, and every Species of *studied Folleries* has infected our Morals, by artfully disguising the greatest Enormities, under those *Tyrant Names*, *Fashion*, *High-Taste*, *Gaiety*, *Honour*, *genteel Life*, &c. Our *main Position* further illustrated, from the Inefficacy of those other temporal Punishments, which are either the natural Consequence of a dissolute Life, or such as are inflicted by the State upon notorious Delinquents. This invincible Perverseness of human Nature, not chargeable upon the lower Class of People only, but too notorious in some of higher Rank, and of the best Education. It is to be hoped the Objects of *eternal* Misery are but few in Number. A brief Characteristic of our own Times. The Necessity of inculcating our Doctrine. The *doing* so, not (as may be thought) the Effect of a gloomy *unforgiving* Temper, but of a *tender* Regard for the eternal Welfare of my Fellow-Subjects.

S E C T. IV. P. 384

Shews, that the Necessity of inculcating our Doctrine at *present* is further evinced, both from the Nature of *modern Vices*, and the pretended Principles upon which these Vices are indulged. The Grace of Redemption is not unconditional. The false Constructions of *Romans* v. 20. and xi. 26. That it is the indispensable Duty of every public Preacher, to obviate the Mischiefs, Moral and Political, that must be the unavoidable Consequence of propagating that dangerous Error, of the absolute, unconditional, universality

of future Happiness. That none can be deaf to our alarming Doctrine, without cancelling the primary Laws of Nature. The many great Advantages, moral and political, naturally resulting from a serious Belief of the *Tremendous Sentence*. Pity that the Legislature does not encourage and countenance such a Belief; without which all penal Laws are of very small Service. The ruling Power ought in good Policy, setting aside the antiquated Motives of Religion, to shew some Marks of public Infamy to such Writings, as, with *impious Wantonness*, throw down the great Barrier of all Laws, *Human* as well as *Divine*. The tragical Mischiefs that we may ere long expect, if such pestilential Writings are still suffered to corrupt and insatuate the Minds of the People. It is not the *Duty* only, but the *temporal Interest* of Men in Power, to encourage every practical Method towards a National Reformation.

S E C T. V.

P. 397

Shews, that notwithstanding the Tremendous Sentence of endless Misery upon some of God's Creatures, has at least been negatively demonstrated, (and we can go no further) yet it will, in great Probability, be warmly opposed by *some sort* of Men. States the various Objections to our Doctrine in the strongest Manner. Returns to each distinct Answers. Our Doctrine no Impeachment of any *one* Divine Attribute. None will be Objects of the Tremendous Sentence, but such as God foresees would, to the *End of Time*, be Proof against every other Expedient. The Objections to our Doctrine, throw a greater stumbling Block in our Way, than those they would seem to remove. The Opposers of the Tremendous Sentence, wrest God's Prerogative out of his Hands. 'Tis the Interest of all notorious Sinners, to believe the literal Sense of the Scripture, relating to future Torments. It will however, be all one to the *Objects* of endless Misery, *where*, or by *what Instruments* their Punishments will

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be inflicted. Mercy in God to reveal this Doctrine. All the Objections and Exceptions to the Tremendous Sanction, prove too much, and all come from a very suspicious Quarter. Those Men greatly blamable, who deny the Tremendous Sentence, upon so much as one single Sinner, be his Crimes what they will. These Men give God the Lie, fling down the strongest Fence of his Divine Mandates. Deny all Authority, whether of Reason or Revelation; so far as our Doctrine does not rest upon Scripture Authority only, but the Truth, (nay and even absolute Necessity, as being with some invincible Minds, the *sine qua non*) has been fully evinced from Analogy, and a great Variety of well-attested historical Facts, in almost every Age and Nation.

S E C T. V.

Shows, that notwithstanding the Tremendous Sentence of endless Misery upon some of God's Creatures, has at least been negatively demonstrated, (and we can go no further, yet in great probability, be warmly urged by the strongest Man-
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 our Doctrine, throw a great stumbling Block in our
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as much as may be, all Contusion in
this Survey of human Nature, and to keep the
Eye of our Understanding from being dis-
TREMENDOUS SANCTION
this Retrospect terminate in this single Point
as recorded by Moses viz. That Man was cre-
ated in the Image of God.

And when we can once extend our Prospect to
the back, as to comprehend what Man was
originally, it will be his Guide to Reason
if we do not from thence collect several essen-
tial, and as such, most interesting Truths
with relation to Man, the great delegated Lord
of this nether World.

The Retrospect here proposed, is looking
BEFORE we can form a right
Judgment of the present State of
Man, what he is, what he may,
or may not be, and in what Re-
lation he stands to that great first
Cause which called Man into Being, we must
look back to the original Formation of our
common



common Progenitor, as left upon divine Record.

And if we take this mighty Retrospect with a careful judicious Eye, and examine severely into the true State of Man before his Glory was eclipsed, we shall then, but not before, be enabled to discourse with some tolerable Propriety about Man's present Situation and his future Expectations. And to prevent, as much as much as may be, all Confusion in this Survey of human Nature, and to keep the Eyes of our Understanding from being distracted by too many intervening Objects, let this Retrospect terminate in this single Point, as recorded by *Moses*,* viz. That Man was created in, or after the Image of God.

And when we can once extend our Prospekt so far back, as to comprehend what Man was originally, it will be a sottish Abuse of Reason if we do not from thence collect several essential, and, as such, most interesting Truths, with relation to Man, the great delegated Lord of this nether World.

The Retrospect here proposed, in looking back to that distant Period when Man was first called into Existence, is undoubtedly a vast

* It may not be improper in this Place, to desire it as a Favour of the Adversaries of revealed Religion, that they would be pleased, once for all, to put up with the *Mosaic* History of the Origin of Man, till they have Leisure to oblige the World with one that is less exceptionable in itself, or supported by better Authority.

vast extensive View, and will require a pretty steady Sight to be able to take in the whole Prospect; and to discover Man, with Clearness, at his first stepping out of the Hand of his Maker. But then, as the natural Eye when it has once took in any Object at the greatest visible Distance, can, in proportion as that Object approaches nearer, discover it with greater Ease and Exactness, just so it will, I presume, be in the Survey of Man. For if we can descry Man under his proper Lineaments at his first Formation, we shall with greater Ease attend him in those various Shapes he has undergone, till we travel down as low as human Nature under her present deplorable State.

And I confess it would be as absurd to judge of the true Nature of Man, the once boasted Lord of the whole Earth, from what he now appears to be, as it would have been to have formed any Idea of the former Glory and Dominion of *Nebuchadnezzar*, when beholding him eating Grass like an Ox; and by Pride and Folly reduced for a Time; even literally, to the same groveling Level with the Beasts that perish. What human Nature now is, we know a little by Experience; but what it may one time or other be, we can form no certain Idea of, without considering well what it was originally.

As to Man's original State, he is declared by an Authority, which I hope I shall prove before I have done to be indisputable, to have

been at first created in the Image of God: But in what that Image of God consisted, as various have been the Opinions of different Men, as the different Systems in Religion they happen to embrace.

The *Jews* indeed were of Opinion, that the divine Image which God stamped upon Man, did not consist in any one, but in many Resemblances of the Deity, some of which I shall present the Reader with as follows.

First, say the *Rabbinical* Expounders of this Verse,—“ Let us make Man in our own Image, after our Likeness;” That as God presides in Heaven, fills and irradiates the sacred * Mansions with his glorious Effulgence; so the Soul which God breathed into Man, presides in the Body, and fills and illuminates its earthly Tabernacle with the bright Beams of Reason and Understanding. Next they affirm, That as the Deity sees every Thing, but is himself † invisible to Mortal Sight, so, in like Manner, the Soul extends her Views to every Thing within her Sphere, but is all the while unseen and undiscovered: Farther, that as there is but one God only in the whole System of ‡ Nature, so there was but one Man created, and indued with one individual Soul: And that as the Eyes of God are always open,

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* *Quod ut Deus implet cælum, anima implet corpus, &c.*

† *Ut Deus, sic anima, videt omnia, sed non videtur.*

‡ *Ut Deus unicus, sic anima unica in corpore; vel homo unus primum factus est.*

Vide SYNOP. CRITICOR. in locum.

"He that keepeth *Israel* neither slumbering
"nor sleeping;" so the Soul of Man is * ever
awake;

* I am well aware how great an Authority will be alledged against this Description of the Soul of Man: Mr *Locke*, that immortal Honour to the *British* Nation, was of Opinion, that this divine Principle breathed into Man, did not think at all, during the Time the Body was in profound Rest. But we are not, I humbly presume, to pay an implicit Adoration to any human Judgment, till this Judgment can be proved to be infallible. The Reason therefore why I beg leave to differ from Mr *Locke*, when he affirms the Soul of a sleeping Man does not think, is a Reason which he himself, without being apprised of it, suggests; viz. "That a Man cannot think at any Time, sleeping or waking, without being conscious of it." Book II. Chap. I. Now as this proves too much, we may, according to Mr *Locke's* usual Method of arguing, conclude that, in the Case before us, it proves nothing at all. For this would be as strong an Objection against the Soul of a waking Man's Thinking, as of the Man's that is asleep; for in both Cases it is, I believe, with the Generality of Mankind, no uncommon Thing, for the Soul not to be conscious one Day of what it might think of the Day before. So that by this Consciousness of Thinking, Mr *Locke* could not, one would have thought, mean any more than the Soul's Retention, or Remembrance of those simple Ideas which it had before received by Sensation or Reflection. This masterly Writer thought as much, and as clearly, as perhaps ever Man upon Earth did, and was, I believe, endued with as strong retentive Faculties as most Men; yet for all this, it might be possible for Mr *Locke* not to recollect one Day what he had been thinking of the Day before; but would any one from hence conclude, that this great Prodigy of Reasoning and deep Penetration, had spent so much as one waking Hour without thinking; and debating in his Mind some Subject or other of Importance. And therefore when Mr *Locke* argues against the Soul of

awake; and while the Body of Man is in profound Rest, and all his Senses close chained down

a sleeping Man's Thinking, it seems evident that this great Reasoner was for once mistaken; and by Consciousness of the Soul, during that very *Moment* the Ideas passed before her, he could never mean that Retention of them after the sleeping Man was awake. This Act of the Soul, I should think, by which it retains former Ideas, may be more properly called Memory; and tho' the Soul, after the Man is awake, does not remember, or as Mr *Locke* himself is pleased to express it, "is not "conscious" of all her Operations during the profound Rest of her sluggish Companion the Body; does it from thence follow that the Soul did not think at all? This only proves that the Man has forgotten what passed in his sleep, or that he is not conscious of any particular Ideas during the profound Rest of the Body; but is no positive Proof that Man's spiritual immortal Principle was asleep, like its dull and heavy Associate.

Is it any Contradiction to say, the Soul of a sleeping Man may think, and ("which indeed is necessary to his "Thoughts") the Man be sensible, or conscious of it at that Juncture, and yet, when awake, lose that Consciousness, or forget most Things that passed in his sleep the Night before? Mr *Locke* was well aware of this Exception to his Hypothesis of the Soul's not always thinking, and makes very light of it in these Words, "That "the Soul in a sleeping Man should be this Moment busy "a Thinking, and the next Moment, in a waking "Man, not remember, nor be able to recollect one Jot of "all those Thoughts, is very hard to be conceived, and "would need some better Proofs than bare Assertions to "make it be believed." It certainly does so; and the Proof I beg leave to offer is this, *viz.* that the State of Sleeping and Waking is so widely different, that Mr *Locke* need not have wondered so much that the Soul of a waking Man could not always remember her own Operations while the Man was *asleep*. The Ideas of the Soul, while

down under the soft Fetters of Sleep, the Soul is perpetually in watchful Motion, soaring into far distant invisible Worlds, and taking in a thousand different Objects in the short Space of one solitary Night. There are others who fancy the divine Image stamped upon Man, consisted in Man's universal Dominion over all the Creatures of this nether World: For as God is supreme Governor over all, and eternally presides at the Helm of the Universe, so Man is the great delegated Lord of the earthly Globe. Now it is very certain that *Adam*, our great Progenitor, had this grand Charter of earthly Dominion granted him by his sovereign Lord the Moment he set foot upon his new erected Empire. The original Grant we have recorded in the following full, tho' concise Terms, introduced with the most gracious Benediction of the supreme Donor,—

“ God blessed them, and God said unto them,
 “ Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the
 “ Earth and subdue it; and have Dominion
 “ over the Fish of the Sea, and over the Fowl
 “ of the Air, and over every living Thing
 “ that moveth upon the Earth,” *Gen. i. 28.*

And I apprehend it was to this universal Do-

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minion while the Body is asleep, are perhaps such as arise chiefly from Reflection, and are but little concerned about outward *material* Objects; so that when the Man awakes, the Soul is greatly alarmed, and those Ideas upon which she was just then intent, are put to flight by the powerful Intervention of *material* Objects, which all at once rush in upon the Senses, and *startle* the Soul into Forgetfulness of her late Operations.

minion over all living Creatures, wherewith *Adam* was originally invested, that the Psalmist alludes in these Words, delivered with a kind of rapturous Astonishment, — “ Lord, * what
 “ is Man that thou art mindful of him, and
 “ the Son of Man that thou visitest him?
 “ For thou hast made him a little lower than
 “ the Angels, and hast crowned him with
 “ Glory and Honour. Thou madest him to
 “ have Dominion over the Works of thine
 “ Hands; thou hast put all Things under his
 “ Feet. All Sheep and Oxen; yea, and the
 “ [wild] Beasts of the Field. The Fowl of
 “ the Air, and the Fish of the Sea, and what-
 “ soever passeth through the Paths † of the
 “ Seas,” *Psalms* viii. So far then, under proper Limitations, was *Adam*, as to his original Power and Dominion, created in the Image and Likeness of his Maker: For as the “ Lord
 “ of Hosts reigneth over all a King for ever,”
 so our great Progenitor was originally invested with

* *Cocceius* indeed contends, that this Passage does not so properly relate to the Power and Dignity of original Man, as to the Honour and Dominion of Christ, who took upon him human Nature, and in that Nature had absolute Power and Dominion over all Creatures: Well, this is very true; and it is likewise as true, that *Adam*, before he fell, was the declared Lord and Heir of all; and therefore this Passage relates both to the first Man *Adam*, while innocent, and to Christ the great Restorer of fallen Man.

† By which I apprehend is meant every Kind of amphibious Creatures, and all those noisome Animals and fierce Monsters that lurk about the Waters, such as Crocodiles, Serpents, &c.

with Princely Dominion over every Creature that dwelleth upon this nether Orb.

But since the foregoing Opinions relating to the divine Image stamped upon *Adam* at his first Formation, seem to be curious *Rabbinical* Conceits, rather than any solid Account of this important Passage, I will endeavour to shew that this divine Image; amongst other Things, may be more properly said to have consisted in Purity and Rectitude of Mind: For that Man was innocent, holy, and pure, when he first came out of the Hands of the supreme Being, will hardly be debated: And so long as he retained these heavenly Properties, so long the resplendent "Image of God and of Glory rested upon him." *Adam*, in his original State, was in Kind, though not in Degree, what our Saviour exhorted his Followers to be, viz. "perfect, as our Father which is in Heaven is perfect." The moral Perfections of the Deity were manifestly represented in original Man; and while *Adam* stood firm in his Allegiance to the King of Heaven, he was the bright Mirror of his Maker, reflecting from its unspotted Surface the Goodness, Purity, and Holiness of the divine Being. And that the Image at first impressed upon Man consisted, in Part however, in Man's original Righteousness and Purity, I am the rather inclined to think, from those many Passages in the sacred Code which so pathetically recommend this divine Perfection of Holiness and Purity, and
always

always enforce the Command by the most powerful, and withal most natural Motive, viz. the Purity and Holiness of the divine Being; *Be ye Holy, for the Lord your God is Holy*, is a Precept most frequently urged. — Which Precept so importunately repeated, seems to imply, that Man (even now his Reason is so much impaired) is capable, by a right Application of his higher Faculties, to arrive at a very considerable Pitch of Piety and Virtue. For unless Man were capable of attaining to some eminent Degree of Holiness, it would be very absurd to call upon him to do a Thing so much out of his Power. What wise End could it answer to propose to Man's Imitation so noble a Pattern as the Author of all Perfection, if after all this needless Solemnity Man was incapable of performing such an arduous Task? But if, on the contrary, Man is capable, if not of arriving to Perfection, yet to very exalted Degrees of Holiness and Piety, what must Man's original Perfection have been, while he stood firm in his Fidelity and Allegiance to the Author of Nature; and kept unsullied that glorious Image in which he was created? For notwithstanding lapsed Nature has afforded so many noble Examples of * heroic Piety, and of almost God-

* Whoever is versed in History, Sacred or Profane, will readily call to Mind the Names of those illustrious Men, who have made themselves Immortal by their glo-

like Acts; yet how weak and imperfect must all these appear to that original Perfection and Holiness, which made the first Man such a bright Resemblance of the glorious Deity? And certainly it must be to this noble Faculty, the original Purity of the Soul, to which the sacred Penman alludes, when, with holy Raptures, he observes, that Man was but one single Degree *lower than the Angels*; for undoubtedly, in his original State, he was the very next Link to the Angels in the Chain and Order of rational Beings. Upon this account Man has been aptly enough stiled *nexus utriusque Mundi*; that curious middle Link in the Chain of created Beings, which joins the Inhabitants of this nether World to the Sons of Light and Glory. If Man then in his State of Innocency reflected, as from an unsullied Mirrour, the moral Perfections of the Deity, in like Manner as the visible material System represents the "eternal Power and Godhead" of Him who first spake it into Being, we may the more easily comprehend the limited Sense of that lofty Expression which stiles original Man the Image of his Maker: That is, *quoad ad mentem, non quoad ad corpus*; for this would be as impious as absurd to imagine.

But if I am not mistaken, there is another exalted Gift with which God enriched his Favourite,

rious and unshaken Attachment to Virtue; and, in the darker Ages, were revered as Gods for their superior Piety and good Deeds.

yourite, Man, that made him, while he preserved it untarnished, a bright Resemblance of his Maker : The Gift I mean was that noble Dower, that glorious Inheritance, which we Mortals have named *Reason*. This is that lovely Companion which, had the first Man retained closely to his Bosom, he would never have been duped by the Prince of Subtily, nor so soon expelled from his native Paradise of Innocence and Delight. And had but our Great Progenitor been as solicitous to have tasted of the immortal Fruits of the Tree of Heavenly Science, as he was to eat of that forbidden Tree, which brought Death and Misery into the World ; he had still been happy, because he would still have been innocent : Nay, and for ought I know, had *Adam* but freely tasted of *Wisdom's* delightful Fruits, he might in Time have been permitted to have put forth his Hand to the Tree of Life ; he would at least however have been exempt from Diseases, Pain, and Death ; he would have remained in the same glorious State in which his bounteous Lord at first placed him, perfectly happy. And what must greatly inhanche the Felicity of *Adam*, was the Assurance that so long as he stood firm, and unshaken in his Obedience to Heaven, so long he would certainly enjoy his present, or a greater Happiness ; but of this more hereafter. In the mean Time, let us hear what the great Prince of human Understanding says of *Wisdom*, that
 divine

divine Gift, which made the first Man, had he preserved it unimpaired, a Resemblance of his Maker, viz. *Wisdom is a Tree of Life to them that lay hold on her.* And had our first Parents plucked the Fruits of this sacred Plant, it might have been to them instead of that vivifying Tree, of whose immortal Fruits had the human Pair once tasted, they had never died. But perhaps it will be said, this is rather declamatory than argumentative: Be it so; for as it was my Intention to set off Wisdom in her highest Charms, I shall conclude this Part of the divine Image in original Man, which we call *Wisdom, Reason, Rectitude of Thinking, &c.* with those two beautiful Descriptions of this divine Boon, one in the *Proverbs of Solomon*, and the other in that Book which also bears his Royal Title. *Wisdom*, says he who is the Author of this fine Piece, *is the Mother of all Things; in her is an understanding Spirit; holy, one only, manifold, subtil, lively, clear, and undefiled; plain, not subject to hurt; loving the Thing that is good; quick, which cannot be letted; ready to do Good, kind to Man, steadfast, sure, free from Care, having all Power, overseeing all Things, and going through all understanding, pure, and most subtil Spirits.* For *Wisdom* is more moving than any Motion: She passeth and goeth through all Things, by reason of her Pureness. For she is the Breath of the Power of God, and a pure Influence flowing from the Glory of

of the Almighty: She is the Brightness of the everlasting Light; the unspotted Mirrour of the Power of God, and the Image of his Goodness.

The Close of this divine Picture supports what I have before advanced of this divine Gift, where I affirm "it was Wisdom that made Man a Resemblance of his Maker."

The other Description of Wisdom we have in the following most beautiful Encomium, *Prov. III. Happy is the Man that findeth Wisdom, and the Man that getteth Understanding. For the Merchandise of her is better than the Merchandise of Silver; and the Gain thereof than of fine Gold. She is more precious than Rubies; and all the Things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of Days is in her Right-hand; and in her Left-hand Riches and Honour. Her Ways are Ways of Pleasantness, and all her Paths are Peace. She is a Tree of Life to them that lay hold on her, and happy is every one that retaineth her.*

These then are the captivating Charms and beautiful Features of this cœlestial Queen. And if the first Man (as undoubtedly was the Case) was bountifully enriched with the Treasures of heavenly Wisdom, he might be properly enough said to be created in, or after the glorious Image of God. There is yet one farther Sense in which Man was created in the Image of God, *viz.* by his being endued with an immortal Soul; this, I presume,

is a comfortable Doctrine that no Man in his Senses will dispute. For that the Soul is immortal, all her Operations, and all her Desires most abundantly evince. And if Man was endued with a spiritual Principle, which, by its Nature derived from the Eternal Fountain of Life, could never cease to exist, we need not be any longer offended at that bold and lofty Expression, which affirms, that Man was created in the glorious *Image of God*. For it may be asked with Propriety enough, How any Being can so nearly resemble the Immortal God, as by being endued with an immortal Soul? As to those other Gifts which God was pleased to bestow upon Man, great and noble as they were, still they were but faint Resemblances of the Divine Being, in Comparison of Man's Immortality. With regard to Man's original Purity, it was only as to Kind, a distant Likeness of the Purity and Holiness of God; for as to Degree, how infinitely short must it, even in a State of the most perfect Innocence, come to the Divine Purity? *Adam's* original Righteousness was but a glimmering Resemblance to that infinite Purity, in whose Presence the *Stars*, those glorious Lamps of Heaven, *are not pure*. The same may be likewise affirmed of that exalted Reason with which Man was originally distinguished, and thereby sufficiently enabled to have baffled all the sly Attacks of the grand Seducer. For what was that Wisdom or Reason

Reason (call it which we please) to that one single Attribute the Divine Omniscience? The most exalted human Wisdom, even before Man suffered that bright Lamp of Heaven to be eclipsed by the dark Body of Sin, could stand in no Degree of Comparison with the Wisdom of that tremendous Being, *who charges his Angels with Folly*. In short, whatever other Excellencies *Adam* was enriched with, yet if from these we subtract his Immortality, they could not, all put together, constitute that glorious Image in which Man was originally created. No, it was that Divine Principle within him, that could never cease to exist, it was that immortal Spirit breathed into Man by the *Ancient of Days*, which made Man the Image of God. Neither I think could any Thing warrant, even the most hyperbolic Expressions of the *Hebrew* Language to affirm positively, That *Man was made in the Image of God*, if we set aside the Soul's Immortality. For if we once deprive the Soul of her Immortality, we may then with full as much Propriety affirm a Parrot is made in the Image of Man, because it can talk, as to say that Man was created in the Image of God, if after all his other noble Endowments he must *die like the Beasts, that utterly perish*. For it is, and can be nothing less than Immortality superadded to Reason, Purity, and Virtue, that can make a created Being a Resemblance of the Deity. Immortality is a
Kind

kind of God-like Attribute, and made some one whom I have at present forgot, cry out with Extasy, *Non homo sum, sed Deus, quoniam naturâ immortalis sum.* Now bold as the Expression was, it is in Fact (under modest Restrictions) not far from the Truth. For as Man has a divine Principle within him, which, as far as its sluggish Companion the Body will give it Leave, is hourly panting after something which in this World it cannot find; as every ingenuous Mind is daily thirsting for still farther and higher Attainments; so it is very reasonable to suppose, that the departed Souls of good Men will be always aspiring to more exalted Degrees of Holiness, and to all Eternity approaching still nearer the glorious Perfections of the Deity, till perhaps, in Process of Time, Man will be spiritualized to such a Degree, as to excel in Dignity the highest Order of created Beings, as much as those Sons of * Glory excel Man in his present dejected State. What a stupendous

* I don't by this means imagine that Man will ever be superior to the Angels, because those blessed Spirits, as well as Man, do in all Probability perpetually arrive to higher Degrees of Glory; and notwithstanding the Absurdity of supposing that any created Beings can ever come up to the Perfections of the Deity; yet that they will all, in their different Orders, aspire to higher and higher Attainments, is both agreeable to the Goodness of the divine Being, and the Dignity of all immortal Natures.

pendous Idea therefore does this afford us of the Dignity of Man's Soul, and of that God-like Height, to which "the Spirits of just Men made perfect" will aspire in the Mansions of Eternal Glory? As Man then was created in the Image of God, and as this Image could not consist in any thing less than the Immortality of the Soul, so we need go no further for a Proof of this interesting Doctrine, than the first Page of the sacred Oracles; especially if it can be proved that these Oracles were delivered from Heaven; which shall be done before I have gone through the Survey of Man. In the mean time let it be noted, that the Immortality of the Soul is a glorious Dignity and indefeasible Inheritance, entailed upon all the *Descendants* of *Adam*: For though our great Progenitor, by a fatal Abuse of that noble *Privilege*, Free Agency, sadly *effaced* that divine Image in which he was created; yet as to one Part of the noble Impression, his Immortality, he could neither lose it by any Act of his own, nor be deprived of it by all the united Powers of created Beings; nay, and some are of Opinion, not by the Deity himself. For though God is, without all gain-saying, omnipotent, which glorious Attribute makes all Things alike possible, still God's Omnipotence cannot work Contradictions, or perform Things in their own Nature impossible. For Instance, the Deity cannot make a Thing to exist and not to exist; nor cause a
Body

Body to move forward and to stand still in the same Space, and in the same Moment of Time; he cannot make Good and Evil the same Thing; nor *Abab* and *Elijah* one and the same individual Man. We might as well suppose the King of *Great Britain* and the Vicar of *Rome* to be but one and the same Person; or that our Saviour's Body is both in every Church in *Italy* and at God's Right-hand at the same Instant. No, these are all manifest Absurdities; and to suppose that infinite Power either would, or could effect them, would be to harbour a very unbecoming Notion of that all-wise Being, whose highest Perfection it probably is, that he cannot work Contradictions.

As therefore the Soul of Man is, by a Nature derived from the Eternal God, immortal, what an adorable Instance is this of God's Favour to Man? And how in return, ought Man to pour out his most grateful Acknowledgments for being thus highly dignified, and endued with such a spiritual Principle, as all the Powers of Nature cannot so much as touch, nor even the Deity Himself annihilate, without doing what a Being of infinite Wisdom cannot do, consistent with his own Perfections? What a noble Consolation then does the Immortality of the Soul administer to injured Innocence, and suffering Virtue? How may the expiring Martyr exult, when he is convinced, that though human Rage and

Power can destroy his Body, his Soul all the while defies the greatest Cruelty and Torture of Men? For in Reality, all the Tortures which the whole Power of created Beings can inflict upon the good Man, can only deprive his inferior Part of Life and Motion; but the Soul is not to be menaced out of her immortal Privilege, nor tortured into Non-existence. She defies all human Punishments; the Rack cannot affect her, nor the sharpest two-edged Sword pierce this invisible Spirit. And even at that astonishing Period, when the whole System of Nature will be dissolved; when *the Firmament shall vanish away like a Scroll*; when *the Stars shall fall down from their mighty Orbs*; when *the Sun and the Moon will sink into nothing, and this nether Globe be burnt up in a Moment*; the Soul of Man will still exist amidst the hideous Ruin: And while Worlds are tumbling down upon Worlds, and dashing one another into Atoms, the Souls of good Men will fly unhurt through the dreadful Uproar, to meet their God and Saviour in the Clouds, and, with their Kindred Saints, to enjoy an Eternal Kingdom of Bliss and increasing Glory.

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SECTION II.

THE first interesting Point with regard to the original Nature of Man being fully stated in the former Section, let us now attend *Adam* at his Entrance upon his earthly Kingdom. The next account of original Man (as recorded by *Moses*, Gen. ii. 15.) is, that *the Lord God took the Man, and put him into the Garden of Eden* (that Seat of Pleasure and Delight, as the Septuagint * renders it) *to dress it, and to keep it*. Now from this account of original Man, it is very obvious to remark, that *Adam* was not to be exempt from all kinds of Employment (this being of all Conditions of Life the most miserable and brutish) but had a double Task enjoined him in that delightful Spot, where his bountiful Creator had placed him. And in what this Employment of original Man consisted, may not altogether be a needless Inquiry, especially as it will afford some useful Hints to all Ranks of Men, without our excepting so much as one individual Person. The first Part of the Task enjoined *Adam* was with respect to the Garden only, *to dress it*: The second, if I mistake not, related both to the Garden and

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himself:

* Εὐκτα Παράδεισῳ τῆς τρυφῆς.

himself: With regard to the first Task enjoined our great Forefather, it was to † cultivate and improve the Beauties of Nature by the nice Rules of Art. *Adam* was, by his superior Skill, to assist Nature in her curious Fancies; where she poured out her bounteous Delights with too much Profuseness, there it was his agreeable Employment to regulate and distribute them with a more equal Hand. And certainly it must have been to Man the highest Favour, instead of an irksom Occupation, to be employed in that blessed Abode where labour was a Pleasure, and Toil a rapturous Amusement, which even Angels might delight in. If then infinite Wisdom saw it meet to prescribe some Degree of Labour, as a necessary Amusement, if a laudable Employment was deemed no Ways below the † Dignity of

† ————— where any row
Of Fruit-Trees over-woody reach'd too far
Their pamper'd Boughs, and needed Hands to check
Fruitless Embraces: or they led the Vine
To wed her Elm ———

MILTON'S *Paradise Lost*, Book V. Line 212.

† *Adam's* Employment in his State of Innocence was deemed by the *British* Poet as a peculiar Mark of Distinction above the Brute Creation. Nor do I think that Miracle of human Nature has given us a finer Picture throughout his divine Poem, than where he exhibits our first Parents busied amongst the Flowers and Fruit-Trees of *Eden*.

On to their Morning Work they haste
Among sweet Dews and Flowers, &c.

Book V.

of Man, while in a State of heavenly Perfection, surely then some sort of reputable Calling is one of the primary Obligations of God and Nature. There cannot be so much as one single Individual, who is not called upon by Reason, Duty, and Interest, to act some worthy Part in the great Theatre of human Life. Idleness was never meant for Man, but for the most sordid irrational Creatures. To be wholly unemployed, is far below the Dignity of Man's Nature, and exposes him to a thousand dangerous Temptations. And notwithstanding the Nature of Man's Labour before, and after the Fall, was widely different, yet the Obligation to Labour is the same, if not stronger: And that Labour which was to *Adam*, before he fell, almost Matter of Choice, became afterwards a Task of absolute Necessity, in Consequence of that Curse denounced upon the Earth for Man's wilful Transgression, *Gen. III. 7. Cursed is the Ground for thy sake, &c.* Before *Adam* gave up his Innocence, the Earth yielded spontaneously in all the Pride of Variety, whatsoever could promote the Pleasure or Advantage of its happy Possessor. But after Man forfeited his Allegiance to his God, the Face of Nature became strangely altered, and now the Bulk of Mankind is obliged by daily Labour to procure daily Food. Those Bounties of Nature which the Earth once produced without Man's Labour and Toil, are in a great measure withheld

held, or at best it is at the Expence of the Sweat of Man's Brow that the Earth yields her Increase; this (as will appear by and by) being the Consequence of Man's Disobedience, and of the sad Change which all Nature underwent on that tragical Occasion. But however, let none repine at that Part of the Sentence pronounced upon offending Man, viz. *In the Sweat of thy Face shalt thou eat Bread*; for persuaded we must be, that those Men most immediately concerned in this seemingly severe Sentence, are in many Respects more happy, in most more innocent, and in all subject to the fewest Temptations. The honest industrious Labourer enjoys a thousand Blessings unknown to the pamper'd enervated Slaves of Luxury and Intemperance. For while the Surfeiting and Excess of the rich Glutton won't suffer him to sleep, the Sleep of the industrious Hind is sweet, whether he eat little or much. And upon this Account, how wise and how good is that Law of Necessity, which is laid upon the Bulk of Mankind, and has enacted the Sweat of Man's Brow to be the Price of his daily Bread? For were Things otherwise ordered, the temporal Affairs of Mortals would move very heavily and awkwardly on: Few, it is to be feared, would in this Case be prudent enough to make a right Choice, so as to prefer daily Labour (though attended with so many invaluable Blessings) to an idle, dissolute Life, had not

not infinite Design made this honest Industry a necessary Means of Subsistence to the Bulk of Mankind. For as the great Exemplar of human Wisdom observes, *He that laboureth, laboureth for himself; for his Mouth requireth it of him*, Prov. XVI. 26. And to this inspired Remark the great Masters of Ethicks amongst the ancient Romans agree, *Hominem experiri multa paupertas jubet*; and *Magister artis ingenique largitor Venter*. See the Prologue of *Persius*.

But to return to our common Progenitor amidst the Amusements of his celestial Grove: And whoever can open his Imagination, so as to view Man in his State of Innocence and Happiness, placed in *Eden*, and employed in regulating, and admiring the captivating Beauties of Nature arrayed in all her *Virgin Glories*; Who, I say, that looks back upon Man thus seated, and thus employed, can think moderate Labour amidst such a Theatre of everlasting Sweets, not a Bliss of the most exalted Kind? And without all Peradventure, had the sovereign Donor of all these Bounties been quite silent, and left it in *Adam's* Option what Part he would act in that Garden of the Lord, he could never have been an idle Spectator of such vast Profusion of beauteous Productions, but would have esteemed it a Pleasure to have been Nature's Assistant in the Regulation of her redundant Stores, and a Pleasure than which, nothing could be greater,
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but the Contemplation of the adorable Perfections of that glorious Being, at whose great creating Word all these Bounties for Man sprang up in a Moment, and in full Perfection of Beauty and Variety.

If therefore bodily Labour was an agreeable Task enjoined by the all-wise Author of Nature, when all the Necessaries and Comforts of Life presented themselves spontaneously to Man; it is very obvious to remark how greatly those People mistake their own Interest, Dignity, and Happiness, who seem to have no other Notions of Life, than to make it a Scene of uninterrupted Indolence and stupid Inactivity. What base Ingratitude and Madness is it for any Man to conclude, that because the kind Bounty of Providence has placed him above the absolute Necessity of Labour and Industry, he is upon that Account exempt from all Sorts of Employment? Neither can there possibly be a more unpardonable Error of Judgment, than for a Man to fancy he has no other Concerns in this present Life, but to follow the wild Track of his Appetites, and to place his *Summum Bonum* in a refined and studied Indulgence of his Senses, those lowest of the human Faculties. These sensual Gratifications are suitable enough to those Brutes of Nature, whose constant Business is *to eat, and to drink, to lie down and sleep, and to rise again* to the same notable Employment, and perpetually to creep on in the low grove-
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ling Paths of mere Sensuality: But for Man thus to act, for a rational Creature to have no better Amusements than the lowest of the irrational Herd, for an immortal Being to have no higher Pursuits than what are in common with that filthy obscene Animal, whose Pleasure is the stinking Dunghill, and whose greatest Delight is wallowing in the Mire, is such an Indignity to human Nature, and such Contempt of that Almighty Being, who created Man for more noble Ends, as affords a sad Proof, that of all Brutes, the rational Brute is the most odious, when once he forgets the Dignity of his Nature, and thereby perversely thwarts every wise End of his Creation. But with what Contempt must every Rank of intelligent Beings look down upon those groveling Wretches, who lavish away that invaluable Jewel [Time] in brutal Gratifications, and act as if they thought it their greatest Glory, and the highest Happiness of Mortals to imitate the lowest Order of Brutes? Vile Ingratitude this, to the bounteous Author of our Existence! And of all Crimes that must certainly be the blackest, for Man so stupidly to extinguish that Lamp of Heaven [Reason] by a continued Round of the most gross and sordid of all Pleasures, those of the mere animal Life.

'Tis a very fatal Mistake in Conduct, for an intelligent Being, who is distinguished from all other earthly Creatures by the glorious Boon

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Boon

Boon of Reason, still to act as if he was endued with no higher Sense of Things than his Horse, or his Dog. For it is a melancholy Truth too notorious, and which can forebode no Good to this Nation, that Thousands of those People from whom different Examples might be expected, seem to have no sublimer Notions of Life, and what they stile its most refined Pleasures, than to snuff in the Air, to encounter the glorious Dangers of the horrible Ditch, and tremendous Gate, in Chace of a Creature not more savage, and but little more ignorant than its fierce Pursuers; and when the noble Toil is over, to rehearse the wondrous Deeds of the Day, and then to eat and drink till Nature can take in no more; and all this profuse Murder of Time is under a fond Belief of that mad *Epicurean* Doctrine, *To-morrow we shall die*. For this Doctrine, absurd as it is, seems at present to bid fair for becoming the fashionable Religion of the unthinking Herd. And yet dangerous, and destructive as this brutal Conduct is, there is no other Way of escaping the fatal Snare, but by being some Way or other lawfully employed. Man, for want of Employment, is openly exposed to every Temptation, and his Senses, those bewitching Syrens of soft seducing Pleasures, will sooth such a one insensibly into the Quicksands of Ruin. *And*

And if an Enquiry should be made how every Man ought to be employed, no other general Rule can be laid down, that I know of, but that every Man's Calling be innocent at least, if not useful. And this is a Rule that every Man may apply to himself, according to the Nature of his Circumstances. The Man of Fortune is by no means exempt from some kind of laudable Employment; neither because he is above the Necessity of daily Labour, is he, upon that Account, to conclude he has a Licence to be idle. 'Tis a great Mistake to imagine that Pleasure alone is the Gentleman's Calling; and uninterrupted Diversions the whole Business of High-Life. This fatal Maxim has been the Ruin and Subversion of the most powerful States, and seems at present to threaten Destruction to one Part of Christendom.

To have nothing to do, was deemed quite contrary to the Nature of Man, even in his original State of Glory; as if Paradise itself would have been a dull Scene for Man, unless he had some proper Amusements for his lower Faculties, as well as for those of Thought and Contemplation. Therefore infinite Wisdom, who alone best knew what was agreeable for Man, made moderate Labour one Part of *Adam's* Task in the Garden of *Eden*; a Task which, however delightful, evidently denotes that some kind of Employment was suitable to human Nature, and no Way below the Dignity

Dignity of Man in his princely State ; and this is a Hint which well deserves the Attention of the greatest Monarchs upon Earth.

But to return to *Adam's* Task in the Care and Cultivation of that Garden of Innocence and Delight, in which his bounteous Lord placed him, *to dress it*. The latter Part of the Injunction to *Adam* was *to keep* that beautiful Spot of Ground in which he was placed, as well as *to dress it*. Now, if I am not greatly mistaken, this other Part of *Adam's* Task expressed in the Words, *Keep it*, *קִשְׁרֵהוּ אֶרְצוֹ*, as rendered by the *Septuagint*, had either an express, or emblematical Relation both to *Adam*, and his earthly Empire. For as to the general Interpretation of this Part of *Adam's* Employment, it by no Means seems to take in the wise Design of Providence : To affirm, that *keeping the Garden* means no more than to *guard and defend it* *à Fenis & Avibus*, is a mighty flat Account of the Matter. And with regard to those other Expofitions of this Passage, which make *Adam* no more than a Tenant for Life, or a Kind of **Lessee* of the *Eden Estate*; and as such was obliged, by Virtue of his Tenure, to leave that beautiful Inheritance to his Successors

* *Addit Moses custodiæ horti præfectum fuisse Adam : ut ostendat, ea lege nos possidere quæ Dominus nobis ad manum contulit, ut frugali & moderato usu contenti, quod residuum erit servemus. Agrum qui possidet, fructum annum*

cessors, as good as he found it; even this must, I think, come infinitely short of the original Design. However, that *to keep* the Garden *è Feris & Avibus*, could never be the only Thing intended, is manifest from hence, *viz.* that it would have been making the great Father of Men a Kind of Scare-Crow, a Task not only in itself below the Dignity of original Man, but a very unnecessary one. For as the all-wise Creator had assigned to every individual Animal its proper respective Food, Gen. I. 29, 30. And as Man's Food was of a different Nature from that of the brute Creation, it would, for this very Reason, (could no better be produced) have been a needless Employment for *Adam* to have chased away the Beasts of the Field from partaking of such Kind of Food, as was entirely contrary to their Natures. Besides, the bounteous Lord of every created Good shower'd down his Gifts in such large Abundance, and the Garden of *Eden* yielded such Variety of encreasing Store, that, during the Paucity of Gatherers, Nature rather wanted to be disburden'd of her cumbersome Gifts, than to be niggardly with-held. And therefore *Adam* would never grudge to let the Creatures of
Eden

annuum ita percipiat ne patiatur fundum per incuriam decidere, sed posteris qualem accepit, vel etiam melius excultum, tradere studeat. Fruclibus ita vescatur nequid per luxum dilapidet, vel per negligentiam corrumpi ac perire sinat. Vide CALVIN, in Gen. Pag. 19.

Eden taste of his Bounties; especially as they all were then in tame and friendly Subjection to Man, and seemed to vie with each other, which should most amuse and delight him with their sportive Gambols. And as the Beasts of the Field were not so wild and savage, while *Adam* retained his Innocence, and with *that* Dominion over every living Creature, as to make any deformed Ravages either upon *Adam* or his Dominions; so he had no need to be upon his Guard against these; his Innocence and Fidelity were his best Weapons; nor could Man be under any Necessity of driving away the Beasts of the Field out of Paradise, when they neither could, nor would attempt to give their earthly Lord the least Disturbance in his secure Possessions. Food they could not want, when all Nature was in her Prime; nor were they (as is just to suppose) at all prompted either by Fierceness, or any other Cause, to break in upon *Adam's* Repose. And it is for this, and many other Reasons (too tedious here to mention) that to *keep the Garden*, must have a higher Meaning than to guard and defend it *εἰς τὴν Φύλαξιν αὐτοῦ*. Neither can I think, that by *keeping* the Garden, no more is meant than so to cultivate and dress it, so as neither to suffer it to grow barren, or to run into luxuriant Redundancy. For had this been the true Sense, then *ἐργάζεσθαι αὐτόν*, To dress it, would have been sufficient to have answered the

the End proposed. Nor can I think, that the inspired Penman would have wrote one single Word, or Letter, which was not of some great and singular Import. *Moses* was too concise to be lavish of Words that had no Meaning; and whatever he may have done in any other Part of his inspired Works, he had no Room for Tautology in that astonishing Epitome, which, in Nine short Chapters, so wonderfully records the Origin of Worlds, the Formation of a new Rank of intelligent Beings, their Fall, their Restoration by the Seed of the Woman, with that tremendous Judgment which brought in the Flood upon the World of the Ungodly. As therefore, according to the foregoing Interpretation of *keeping the Garden*, both the Task in itself would have been needless, and far below the Dignity of original Man, as yet in his Princely State, so some other Meaning, much deeper, must be intended by *keeping the Garden of Eden*. And unless I am greatly deceived, this *keeping of the Garden* could imply nothing less, than for *Adam* to guard both himself, and his heavenly Dwelling, from the foul Ravages, and dangerous Inroads of some other skulking Enemy, more by far to be dreaded than all the Fury of wild Beasts. *Adam* was both to defend himself, and his glorious Habitation, from the Incursions of that prowling Wolf, who was lurking in Ambush, and watching every Opportunity to supplant God's new Crea-
D ture,

ture, Man; and, if possible, to dispossess him of all his Happiness and Glory.

Adam, therefore, was to be upon his Guard, lest he should be surprised, not by any of the Brute Creation, but by that *roaring Lion*, who was a *Murderer from the Beginning*, and ever made it his constant Business to walk about, seeking whom he might devour. And according to this Interpretation of *keeping the Garden*, *Adam* was given to understand, even before the Interdiction of the fatal Tree, that he had an Enemy somewhere lurking about, that would possibly endeavour to disturb his Repose. This previous Notice, then given to *Adam*, was both an Argument of the divine Goodness, and of Man's inexcusable Neglect, for not paying a more sacred Regard to the merciful Warning. And as little Doubt can be made, but that the fatal Mistake of *Adam* was left upon Record for the Admonition of his Descendants, so it would be impertinent to caution any Man of common Sense to guard against the sly Attacks of that dangerous and infernal Adversary, who by Subtilty supplanted the first of human Race, and is hourly watching to repeat the like ruinous Experiments upon all that are thoughtless, secure, and unguarded.

SECTION III.

NOTWITHSTANDING *Adam*, as is evident from what has been observed relating to the true Import of *keeping the Garden of Eden*, was sufficiently apprized that he had a certain Enemy somewhere lurking about, that might one Time or other endeavour to supplant him; yet the Matter was not wholly left to rest here: The divine Being was pleased to acquaint *Adam*, in plainer Terms, of the Possibility of his being attacked by some subtle Foe. Nay, infinite Goodness pointed out to Man the very Thing by which his Enemy would endeavour to seduce him from his Faith and Allegiance in the true God. And not only cautioned, but (which rendered Man without Excuse) strictly commanded *Adam*, upon Pain of Death, not to meddle with the fatal interdicted Object. For it is thus recorded, *Gen. ii. 16, 17. And the Lord God commanded the Man, saying, Of every Tree of the Garden thou mayst freely eat: But of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the Day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.* As the Words recited contain the great Original Covenant between God and Man, it is undoubtedly a Matter of the last Importance, that all Men should know

what are on their Parts, as well as on God's, the true Conditions of this solemn Pact or Covenant. And in order to comprehend the true Meaning of this Original Covenant betwixt God and Man, let it be noticed, that there are some Things in this great Compact that are delivered in open and explicit Terms, others as truly, though not so expressly imply'd. And to set this Matter in as full a Light as we are able, I will first consider what Man was left at full Liberty to do, and what he was strictly commanded not to do. As to the Liberty wherewith *Adam* was invested, it extended to the free and full Enjoyment of every created Good: Nor was any Gratification (consistent with the Dignity of his immortal Nature) denied him, but only one single Thing. What that actually was, we are a great deal in the dark bewildered Path of mere Conjecture. We are told indeed in general, that it was the Fruit of a Tree in the midst of the Garden; but whether under that Description something further is not figuratively couched, Time, and a more intimate Acquaintance with the mysterious Revelations of God, will, I make no Doubt, hereafter bring to Light. For as the Scriptures were perhaps in no Age of the World better understood, so it is a reasonable Supposition, that a little Time will throw Light upon many Passages in the Oracles of God, which at present must remain Objects of Faith to the most inquisitive and diligent Searcher
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after Truth. The *Book of Life*, like those boundless Regions of Bliss to which it points out the Way, contains Millions of precious Jewels, which will hardly be all discovered till the End of Time. For the Scriptures lead into such a boundless Field of inexhaustible Treasure, that there will always be something valuable to be gleaned up, even by the most homely hand. And 'tis very probable, that the true Meaning of the interdicted Tree, and what the Fruits forbidden properly denoted, may, ere long, be discovered by some honest and * diligent Searcher of the Scriptures. In the mean Time however, it is very evident, that though the natural Serpent is mentioned by Name in the *Mosaic History*, to have been the Seducer of human Race; yet it is likewise as evident, from the whole Account of that Transaction, that the natural Serpent was only made an Instrument in the fatal Deception; but that the real and very Deceiver of human

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Race

* I don't at all doubt, but that noble *Berean Spirit* of *searching the Scriptures daily*, which so laudably prevails in this very Age, amongst the Laity as well as the Clergy, will clear up many of those obscure Passages which have for Ages been hid, and perhaps may never be all brought into full Day-light, till that grand Eclaircissement, when *the Lion of the Tribe of Judah shall prevail to open the Book of God*: And will then thoroughly illustrate, and vindicate, out of this great Decretal of Heaven, every Sentence of that sacred Extract, which we have now upon Earth; and praised be the Goodness of the Almighty, that we still have this invaluable Treasure in free and ample Possession.

Race was the Devil, whose figurative Name the Scriptures often mention under the Denomination of *that old Serpent the Devil*. Therefore as the Grand Deceiver of Mankind is always to be understood under the Title of the Serpent, the fatal Instrument in Man's Seduction, so it is not improbable, but that the forbidden Tree might emblematically point out some particular Crime, in its own Nature very atrocious, and destructive to the Delinquent. But to wave this at present, *Adam* knew that one certain Thing was (and for very wise Reasons no doubt) forbidden him, and what that very Thing was, he could not be ignorant of; and this was, to him, sufficient to have prevented him from even so much as in Thought desiring to meddle with what his Creator had interdicted; and had made that one single Interdiction the only Test of *Adam's* Faith and Allegiance to the bounteous Author of all that vast Profusion of Blis bestowed upon Man. *Adam*, as a Test of his Obedience, and as a Token from whom, and by what Conditions, he held and enjoyed so many noble Privileges, was only, out of a whole World of Bounties, denied one single Experiment, *viz.* to know the Difference between *Good and Evil*. Fatal Curiosity! And thrice happy would our great Progenitor have deemed himself, if he had been contented to remain as God at first created him, innocent and happy. But behold the unspeakable Wisdom of God, that rather than

than impose upon Man any Thing strictly absolute, or send him out of his hand like a meer Machine, unable of himself to move either this way or that; God created Man after his own highest Perfection, a free Agent, able to stand and be eternally happy; or if he should choose to fall, and prefer the Abuse of his Liberty to Life and Happiness, fall he might, and reap the Wages of his Indiscretion, Misery and Death. And had *Adam* been so created, as not to have had it in his Power to disobey, if he had been deprived of Freedom of Choice, he would have had no Trial of his Obedience, nor, consequently, would his Submission to God's Laws have rendered him any Object of Reward. For in this Case, what must Man be rewarded for? Why only for doing a Thing which he could not help doing. And therefore it is not unlikely, that if *Adam* had been absolutely restrained in fact, as well as commanded not to meddle with the forbidden Tree, it would have given a Handle for calling this a mere arbitrary Act in God, only for the Sake of tyrannizing over Man, his animated Piece of Clock-work. But *Adam*, praised be the divine Goodness, was not thus created, or left so imperfect, as not to move any otherwise than by mere Necessity. He had, from his first stepping out of his Maker's Hand, *Life* and *Death* set before him, and was left at full Liberty to choose which he would. And surely, nothing could so effectually have secured to *Adam* a

right Choice, as the vast Difference between the Things to be chosen, and the mighty Sanctions severally annexed to a right or wrong Choice. As to *Adam's* making a wrong Choice, and abusing the Freedom of his Will, the Sentence pronounced against so doing, was certain unavoidable Death; *The Day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.* *Moriendo, Morieris.*

And what was meant by the Death here denounced, will appear in the fullest Light, by comparing the Two Sanctions of the Law which God gave *Adam* together; for whatever One denotes (as to the Extent and Continuance thereof) must, I imagine, either expressly or tacitly be included in the Other. As to the Sanction of Reward to *Adam's* Obedience, it was that he should remain eternally happy. For so long as he retained his Integrity, he was to have been entirely exempt from Death, and all its tragical Prefaces, and fearful Inlets upon the Body by raging Fevers, pinning Consumptions, and the more dreadful Havock of Famine, Pestilence, and the Sword. *Adam,** while innocent, could not be miserable; he had all the Earth, in its Prime of Glory, to range in at Pleasure; the whole World was his Kingdom, and his delightful

Capitol

* Ante peccatum patebat aditus ad lignum vitæ, & erat corpus *Adæ*, nec morbis, nec corruptioni, nec morti subjectum.

Capitol the sweet Grove of *Eden*. 'Twas there that *Adam* was, under God, to reign a King, in all the Splendor, Happiness, and Glory, that a State of Innocence, and uninterrupted Tranquility could afford. And after *Adam* had, for a Time, given Proof of his Obedience, by no more than the easy Observance of one single Command, he was to transmit to his happy Progeny the Kingdom which God had given him; and in the due appointed Time of his Creator, to be translated from Earth to a still more glorious and more happy Region, viz. to the Heaven of Heavens, and to the adorable Place of God's holy Habitation. Neither would *Adam*, had he stood firm in his Allegiance, been under that sad Necessity of entering into Life through the Gates of Death; but he would have passed, without dying, from one happy * Mansion to another infinitely more so; and like some mighty temporal Prince, possessed of one Kingdom already, invited to another far superior in Power and Dominion, without one single stroke of Violence, Bloodshed, or War. This then was actually to have been the happy State of our great Progenitor, had he retained his Integrity to his Creator. For that this was the Reward God designed for *Adam*'s Obedience, is evident from the Absurdity of the contrary Supposition, viz. that *Adam* was one Time or other to die (at least

* E terra in cœlum sine interitu, & illæsus migrasset.
CAL. in *Gen.* Pag. 19.

least a bodily Death) even though he had stood firm in his Obedience. But let me ask, what could induce an all-wise and merciful Creator, first to call Man into Being, and to place him in perfect Happiness, and then, after all this Solemnity, to subject this happy Creature, Man, to lose that Happiness, without any Offence on Man's Part? This would be such a Reflection on the Wisdom and Goodness of God, and so contrary to natural Reason, that this absurd Opinion need only be mentioned, and it confutes itself. Besides, does not God tell *Adam*, that if he eat of the forbidden Tree, he should *surely die*? And what can this more evidently imply, than that if *Adam* did not eat of the forbidden Tree, he should not die? For as Disobedience was to be punished with Death, it certainly includes, though not in Terms expressed, that Life was to be the sure Reward of *Adam's* continued Obedience; and that the Life here meant, was nothing less than a Life of increasing Happiness and eternal Glory, would be Madness to deny. If, therefore, a Life of eternal Happiness was the sure Reward of *Adam's* continued Obedience, then, to do Justice to the Antithesis, and to keep the Two Eternal Sanctions of the Laws of God in due Equiponderacy, whatever was to be the Reward of his Obedience, something quite opposite to this was to be the Punishment of his Disobedience. The Reward, as we see, was Life Eternal; and whether the Punishment

ment was not to have been Death Eternal will appear in its due Place. In the mean Time I shall shew, that Man, by his Disobedience, was subject to more Deaths than one. And though it appears that *Adam* was not immediately struck dead upon his disobeying God's Command, as the Sentence, *The Day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die*, seemed to denounce; yet for all this, though Death (as to *Adam's* Body) was not instantly inflicted, *Adam*, that very Moment he transgressed, * began to be mortal, and miserable likewise. He was dead to all Good and Happiness, though still alive to Sin and to Misery. And notwithstanding *Adam* was not took off by an immediate sudden Blow from Heaven, yet Death had invisibly seized upon him; the Sentence had in Part took Place; Wrath was gone out against guilty Man from an offended God, and the Plague of Sin, the Moment Sin was committed, was actually begun. Man found himself indeed still endued with Motion, and had so much of Sense remaining, as to perceive his own Wretchedness: He had just that Sort of Life left him, which made Life itself miserable; but as to that Life of *Adam* which he once enjoyed, as to his original Tranquility, Happiness, and Glory, he had no more of these

* Nam tunc morti addictus *Adam*, & mors regnum suum in eo inchoavit, donec remedium afferet superveniens Gratia.

these remaining, than the stinging Remembrance that he had now for ever lost them: And * by his destructive Curiosity of desiring to know Evil as well as Good, he found too late his own fatal Mistake, and the dreadful Difference between Evil, now in his own Possession, and Good, vanished away. For the miserable Effect of *Adam's* Curiosity to know Evil as well as Good, was, that he sadly experienced Good and Happiness lost, and Evil, Misery, and every other Ill, had in fatal Return. And though *Adam* was suffered after he fell, just to move and enjoy a Kind of Animal Life, for it was in Comparison of what he once enjoyed no better, yet, as to all the noble Operations of his Soul, how faint, how dull, and how distracted those were to his former exalted Meditations, while his Mind was innocent and free from all disordered Passions, may

* The fatal Effects of the forbidden Fruit are most pathetically described by the *British* Poet in the following Speech:

O *Eve*! in evil Hour thou didst give Ear
To that false Worm, of whomsoever taught
To counterfeit Man's Voice; true in our Fall,
False in our promis'd Rising; since our Eyes
Open'd we find indeed, and find we know
Both Good and Evil; Good lost, and Evil got.
Bad Fruit of Knowledge, if this be to know,
Which leaves us naked thus, of Honour void,
Of Innocence, of Faith, of Purity,
Our wonted Ornaments, now soil'd and stain'd!

Book IX.

may be reasonably conjectured. As to all the higher Faculties of *Adam*, Reason, Understanding and sweet Reflection, these were all near being extinguished by the dark Clouds of * Sin and Remorse. And with regard to all spiritual Exercises of Piety and Devotion, Prayer and private Intercourses with his Maker, these were all dead in *Adam*, and he lost and dead to them, even from the very first Moment he lost his Innocence. And in every spiritual Sense was Man ruined and dead, when he, by Sin and Disobedience, estranged himself from him, who was the sole Fountain of Life and Happiness. And it was owing to the same fatal Source of all Evil, *Sin*, and Rebellion against the kind Author of Nature, that Man became so exactly the Reverse of those high and spiritual Attainments, which make Men *dead unto Sin* but *alive unto Righteousness*: For *Adam* had unhappily traversed this heavenly Perfection, and by Disobedience he was, God knows, *alive unto Sin*, but *dead unto Righteousness*, unless a happy Period should arrive, when reviving Grace should repair, in some Degree at least, the Ruins which Sin had brought

* Tanta est peccati malicia, vis & operatio, ut totum genus humanum in ipsa illius origine, & naturæ primordiis, sinceritate bonæ conscientiæ, fiducia erga Deum, rectitudine justitiæ, libertate arbitrii ad bonum, tranquillitate vitæ, dignitate imaginis Dei & dominii, naturæ quoque incorruptione & immortalitate privaverit, & hypocriti infectum, prævum, ad quævis mala pronum, &c.

MUSCUL. in Loc. Commun. Pag. 19.

brought into the World. For till that auspicious Hour, *Adam* felt by sad Experience, that he was yet *alive in the Flesh* (far worse perhaps than Death itself) but *dead in the Spirit*. This then, I think, may be properly deemed, what some Men stile it, the *first Death*, or rather, the Beginning to die; Man, from the Moment he fell, being, as to all spiritual Perfections, lost and undone. The *next Death* which Sin brought into this nether World, was the Dissolution of Man's Body: For notwithstanding this, as to *Adam*, was not immediately executed, yet the grim Tyrant had seized upon Man, his destined Prey; and *Adam*, from the very Moment he forfeited his Allegiance to his God, became Death's miserable Captive, and was one Day to fall a Victim to his unrelenting Hand. For *as by Man's Disobedience, Sin* (that hideous Monster) stalked *into the World*; so by Sin came *Death*, Sin's inseparable Associate. For Death, it is too visible, *has passed upon all*, and the Descendants of *Adam* are under the unavoidable Necessity, in Consequence of their Descent, to pay one Day or other this great Debt of Nature, as it is generally stiled, though I must own it is very improperly so called, because Man by Nature was immortal, and was never to have been subject even to a temporal or bodily Death, and therefore this Death may be more justly stiled, not the Debt of Nature, but of Sin. It was Sin alone that introduced her

grisly

grizzly Companion amongst Mortals, and made them subject to what I shall beg Leave, for Distinction's Sake only, to call the *second Death*. There is yet another Death evidently implied in the Sentence denounced upon *Adam's* Disobedience, as I shall endeavour to shew by and by. But before we can comprehend the Nature of this *third Death*, we must look back to the Reward which God in great Bounty designed for *Adam*, if he had stood firm in his Allegiance. For whatever the Reward of continued Obedience was to have been, either as to Man, the Object of that Reward, or to the Duration of the Reward itself, the Punishment of unrepented Disobedience was to be inflicted upon the same Object; and this Punishment was to be of equal Duration with the Reward of continued Obedience. Now the Covenanted Reward of *Adam's* continued Obedience was (as has been already shewn) his being exempt from Death, and all its tragic Prefaces, and fearful Inlets upon the Body, by burning Fevers, wasting Consumptions, and every other sad Train of Ills: And that *Adam*, after he had, for a certain Period, given sufficient Proof of his Obedience, by the easy Observance of one single Command, was then to transmit to his happy Progeny that delightful Region which God had bestowed upon him; and, in the wise appointed Time of Providence, to be translated from his earthly to a heavenly Kingdom, and to pass from this ne-
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ther World to the Heaven of Heavens, and all this, without being subject to that unavoidable Necessity of passing to Life through the gloomy Portal of Death. 'Tis then evident, what was, by God, designed to have been the certain Reward of continued Obedience, *viz.* a continued Life of encreasing Happiness and Glory. And therefore, what less was to be the Punishment of continued Disobedience, or as Theologists call it, *Perseverance in Sin*, but something of a quite contrary Nature? And if we would investigate this Matter severely, and do Justice to the Antithesis, that is, to the two Sanctions of Rewards and Punishments, expressed or implied in the original Covenant between God and Man; then it from thence most unanswerably follows, that as a Life of increasing and immortal Happiness was the stipulated Reward to Man's continued Obedience, so eternal increasing Torment was the fearful Punishment of hardened and continued Disobedience: And the Apostle plainly intimates this certain Truth, when he affirms, that *the Wages of Sin is Death, but that the Gift of God is eternal Life through Jesus Christ*. For if eternal Life is the Gift of God to the Obedient, then Death to the Hardened and Disobedient is eternal Death; for otherwise, where would be the Propriety of the Antithesis, if the Reward was in Duration eternal, and the Punishment only finite? But this Opinion is in itself absurd, contrary to the very Idea of Justice,

Justice, and flatly repugnant to the true Interpretation of the original Covenant between God and Man; which tells *Adam* very expressly, that from the Moment he broke that Covenant he should surely die. And farther, as the Reward promised to continued Obedience related to the whole Man, as made up of two distinct Substances, a Soul and a Body, as *Adam* was to have been rewarded with immortal Glory in his whole self, in his natural as well as spiritual Part; so I am much afraid for myself, and every other Sinner, that, had not an Expedient been found out, both the Soul and Body of Man must have yet remained under the Curse originally denounced against offending Man. And it seems, I apprehend, pretty clear from the Account of the different Deaths, to which *Adam* by his Transgression was rendered obnoxious, that the two first Deaths, one of which was that of his spiritual Nature, the other the temporal Death of his Body, were both irreversibly and absolutely contained in this third and last Death, which may very aptly be stiled *Death Eternal*: There being no Promises of God to the contrary, nor any Hopes, unless very delusive ones, of repassing the unfordable Gulph of *Gebenna*. But this is not the Point which I shall at present chuse to dwell upon. In the mean Time therefore let it be noticed, that uninterrupted Happiness was designed to be the certain Reward of Innocence, and that

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Guilt

Guilt and Misery were, *ab initio*, as inseparably united to each other as a Cause and its Effect. And after *Adam* had wilfully disobeyed the Command of his Maker, and given up his Integrity, Paradise was no longer as such to him. When Innocence was once fled out of *Eden*, Happiness, her divine Associate, instantly took her Flight; and the sacred Grove could no longer endure Man, its late darling Lord, after he had polluted the holy Ground, and suffered the Prince of Hell to set down his infernal Standard in the Garden of God. Paradise could not bear the Sight of guilty Man, who had so fatally defecrated its divine Shades, by permitting those hideous Monsters, Sin and Death, to make their deformed and ruinous Inroads into the sacred Bowers of the Lord. And had God (which indeed consistent with his absolute Sentence against Man's Disobedience he could not do) had the Almighty let Man alone, and suffered him, after he fell, still to have remained in the pleasant Groves of *Eden*, yet the pure Region would have ejected its corrupted and guilty Inhabitants. And as the Land of *Canaan*, when it was polluted by the Abominations of the Heathens, is recorded, (*Levit. XVIII. 28.*) *to have spewed out that idolatrous and filthy People*; so *Eden*, the Garden of spiritual Delights, and Scene of pure untainted Pleasures, would even have been sick of Man, now become corruptible and defiled by the foul Contagion

tagion of Sin. Paradise would have have too pure and refined an Air for guilty Mortals to have breathed in for the future. For as Man's Nature was, by the Sin of Disobedience, become utterly changed, and almost sunk down into that original Dust, out of which his Body was first moulded, and vivified with an immortal Spirit, so the pure Atmosphere of *Eden*, his original Climate, was now, even in a philosophic Sense, too thin and too pure for dull, heavy, and perishable Mortals to breathe and live in at all. And *Adam*, after he became subject to Death, and had, by Sin, the Seeds of Corruption, and every latent Disease lurking in his Body, was no longer a fit Inhabitant of the holy Ground of *Eden*. All his Appetites, and all his Desires, were become too gross and sensual, to take any Complacency or Delight in those divine Amusements, which, while innocent, he relished with Ecstasy and Rapture. And as the marvellous and captivating Objects of Paradise became, after the Fall, even insipid to the Mind of *Adam*, now clouded and impaired by Sin, so Man's Body appears to have been as incapable (even in the very Nature of Things) to receive any longer Gratifications in its original Habitation. The pure and wholesome Fruits of the Garden of *Eden* would have been deemed, by the gross Appetite of degenerated Man, in the same Light as the sensual *Israelites* afterwards esteemed Manna, that delicious

Bread of Heaven. And *Adam*, in all Probability would, (like those ungrateful Murmurers) had he still continued in Paradise, have grown weary of his Food, though divine; and his Soul like theirs would have loathed that light and spiritual Bread. And therefore, upon this Account, it seems not a little probable, that God's driving Man out of Paradise, was almost what may be called an Act of the greatest Kindness to *Adam*, or at least it is very evident, that God in this Procedure of Judgment thought upon Mercy. For as Man, by Disobedience, was utterly changed from his original Nature, so Reason will tell us, that as Man's original Delights were purely adapted by the wise Author of Nature to a State of Innocence, they could not, in themselves, be any Sort of Pleasure to a State of Guilt, but quite the Reverse. And when these Things are duly considered, God's Wisdom, as well as his Justice, in the Expulsion of *Adam* out of Paradise, will stand the severest Scrutiny of philosophic Pride, and the Ways of God to Man, will want no other Vindication, but their own incontestible Rectitude.

And the Service which I apprehend Revealed Religion may receive from the Account here given, will not be altogether inconsiderable. For as the Objections against the Scriptures are chiefly, though very ignorantly, founded on this false Supposition, *viz.* that God's
Dealing s

Dealings with Man are merely arbitrary, *i. e.* not founded in the Nature of Things, but wholly depending upon his own uncontrollable Will; so I think what has been observed with Relation to *Adam's* Expulsion out of Paradise, is a sufficient Vindication of God's Wisdom and Justice in that Procedure. For the Step therein took, whether ascribed to the Will of God, or to the Eternal Nature, and Fitness of Things, makes no Difference as to the Procedure itself: For if *Adam's* Expulsion out of *Eden*, was a necessary Consequence of *Adam's* Disobedience, where is the Offence, to unprejudiced Reason, whether this be called the Will of the divine Being, that so it should be, or attributed to the Fitness and Nature of Things, that so it ought to be? For whatever infinite Wisdom and Goodness wills, must be right; and therefore to make stiff Distinctions between the Rectitude of the divine Will, and the eternal Fitness or Unfitness of Things, is such a Strain of metaphysical Madness, that it ought to be hissed at by all Men, that would be thought to have Truth, and the real Interest of Religion uppermost. As therefore it is evident, that *Adam* was so alienated by Sin, as that he could have been no longer happy even in Paradise itself, it may from hence be fairly concluded, that wicked Men, who pass out of Life without any Sense of their Crimes, or the least Sorrow for their former Impieties, could not but be entirely

miserable, even should God admit them into the Regions of Bliss. For as the Joys of Heaven are undoubtedly of a very refined and spiritual Nature, they would be all lost and flung away upon such People, as had never, in this their State of Probation, the least Relish for such spiritual Delights. And as there are Thousands of People, who not only neglect all the Duties of Prayer, Praises and Thanksgivings, which all God's Creatures are strictly obliged and commanded to perform to the great Author of Nature; so these Men's Minds are, by hardened and avowed Impiety, professedly Enemies to every Thing that has a Relation to Devotion: They are, as is very visible, quite uneasy, and out of their Element, when attending the grave and sacred Duties of Prayer and Supplication to God. How then is it possible, in the very Nature of Things, for Men, who are all their Life-time utterly averse to every sacred Duty, and wholly estranged from all sublime and spiritual Joys, to taste any Happiness in the Regions of eternal Glory, where those happy Sons of Light are chiefly employed in praising and adoring the great Creator and his marvellous Works? And as even Reason will tell us, that God is a Being of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity, *i. e.* to suffer any sinful or unsanctified Creature to approach near his holy Dwelling; how can it be imagined, that such profane Wretches as plunge into Eternity under the Load of
unrepented

unrepented Guilt, can ever be admitted to a Place of Happiness, and immortal Glory? No, depend upon it, these will find Admittance into no other Dwelling than the Land of utter Darkness and eternal Horror. For, as they wilfully, and even to a Degree of impudent Boasting and Self-Appause, stop their Ears to the most moving Language of the Holy Ghost, and wantonly refuse to hear the Voice of this divine Charmer, charm he never so wisely; they may now be assuredly convinced, that this their Sin, so often and so maliciously repeated, is that very Sin unto Death, which, since they either cannot, or will not repent of in this World, there will be no Place of Repentance found for it in another. No, *These are the Men*, that, as they are wholly alienated in Mind and Spirit from every pious and heavenly Attainment, so they are, even by their own perverse and hardened Perseverance in Vice, consigned over to the destined Place of unrepented Impiety, viz. the Land of eternal Misery. Heaven they could not be happy in; and there is no other Medium, whatever Fools may dream, between this and Hell. The Joys of Heaven would be no Joys to a profane Man; and as the divine Mansions of God's House are prepared for none but those who endeavour to live and die in humble Submission to the Laws of God, and of right Reason; so all profane

and impenitent Men, who live and die in open and declared Contempt of these Laws, are self-lost; they render themselves incapable, in the strict Nature of Things, of being happy in the only Place, where Happiness is to be found. Heaven, to these impious Men, would be a Place of the greatest Torment, as being in the more immediate Presence of an incensed God: And therefore it is a Punishment, founded in the very Nature of Things, that all boasting impenitent Sinners are eternally excluded from the Kingdom of Glory. For as the profane Wretch, who is hardened against every temporary Expedient, and plunges into Eternity under the black Guilt of daring Impiety, could not be happy in Heaven, nor Heaven endure the Sight of him; so there cannot possibly be any other Habitation destined for such a Monster of Wickedness, but some doleful Region, far removed from God and Happiness.

S E C.

SECTION IV.

NOTWITHSTANDING it must greatly affect every tender Bosom, to behold how soon our common Progenitor fell from his original happy State, and by one fatal Mistake forfeited his princely Habitation, and was driven out from God and Bliss; yet this View of *Adam*, after his Fall and Expulsion out of *Eden*, is absolutely necessary in order to form a clearer Judgment of human Nature, under her present eclipsed State. I will therefore now go on to take the best Survey of Man, I am able, in some of the most interesting Events, from the Fall of *Adam* down to the Christian Æra. And it is with the deepest Sorrow to be noticed, that the first most dreadful Effect of Sin amongst the Descendants of *Adam* was Murder, with all its tragical and black Train of Ills: For this Murder was the dark, premeditated Act of deliberate Revenge, it was the cruel Assassination of one Brother by the unnatural Hands of another. And what was, of all others, the most fearful Aggravation of this Crime, was, that devilish Envy, which *St John* observes, was the Cause of *Cain's* slaying his Brother *Abel*; for, *Wherefore*, says the inspired Writer, *slew he him?*

him? viz. because his own Works were evil, and his Brother's righteous. Cain, like all irreligious Men, could not bear the Sight of a Person less profane than himself; his Brother's sincere Piety was a living Satire upon his own affected and hypocritical Devotion; and when he found that *Abel's Offering* was accepted, and his own rejected with Indignation, his Mind was fired with Revenge, and his Countenance threatened nothing less than resolved Destruction to his innocent Brother. For that *Cain* was fully bent upon murdering his Brother *Abel*, from the very Day that he perceived his Brother's Offering was accepted, the Sequel evidently evinces. But before we advance any farther, let it be observed, that, by this Acceptance of *Abel's Offering*, we are to understand, that God was pleased, in some visible Manner, to manifest his Approbation, perhaps by Fire from Heaven, consuming *Abel's Offering*, which was a certain Token of Acceptance in the early Ages of the World, or by God's looking down upon *Abel* and his welcome Offering, with some glorious Display of a propitious Aspect; and in Consequence of the divine Approbation, crowning the temporal Affairs of *Abel* with Success. And consequently, when it is said, *but unto Cain, and to his Offering, He (God) had not Respect*, we are to understand, that God did not look down upon either the Offering itself, or upon him that offered it, with the same propitious

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or approving Countenance; neither did he crown the temporal Affairs of *Cain* with the like prosperous Success, as that which attended his Brother *Abel's*. And as it is very probable, that the different Dispensations of Providence to *Cain* and *Abel*, made the Countenance of the former to fall, and in his Mind to murmur against God, and to meditate Revenge against his innocent Brother; so I apprehend it is very evident, from whom this dark Temper of Mind, which cannot bear to see others more happy than themselves, is derived, *viz.* from him who is in open Rebellion against God, and has no other Satisfaction, but that of gaining deluded Mortals over to his own Party, and all this under an invincible Enmity to the King of Heaven, and in cruel Hopes of making others as miserable as himself.

As I pass along, it may not be amiss to inquire into the Reasons of this different Event to the two Brothers, why the Offering of the one was accepted, and the other rejected. Now it would be in the highest Degree absurd, to attribute this different Success of the two Brothers to the Difference of the Things offered: The Offerings in themselves were both alike equal to the divine Being. And it would be the Perfection of superstitious Madness to imagine, that the Great Creator and Giver of all Things which Man enjoys, should stand in need of receiving any of these Things

Things back again at the Hand of Man. No, even common Reason will teach Men, that the supreme Being wanteth no Offering, either of *fine Flour*, or any Thing else; he standeth not in need of *the Blood of Bulls*, or of *the Fat of fed Beasts*. And therefore God did not prefer *Abel's Offering*, merely because he brought *the Firstlings of his Flock*, and of *the Fat thereof*: Neither was *Cain's Offering* rejected on Account of the Things offered, but for some other Reasons which will appear by and by. In the mean Time, let us see why *Abel's Offering* was accepted: It was, not, as has been observed, purely on Account of the Offering itself, *that* having nothing to recommend it to the divine Favour, preferable to the Offering of *Cain*: The Reason therefore of *Abel's Offering* being so graciously accepted of the Creator of all Things, was the sincere Disposition of him that offered it: *Abel* was well convinced the least Thing he could do, was to bring the choicest and prime of what he had, as a grateful Token from whose bounteous Hand he received all that he enjoyed. And it seems very probable, from the short Account we have left upon Record, that *Abel* did not bring his Offering to God's Altar, purely in Compliance with any positive Command, and, as such, an Offering of absolute Necessity, but it looked like a voluntary Gift; it had the good Appearance of a free and unrestrained Oblation, and was as much

much the Act of his Heart as of his Hand. That pious Man brought an Offering unto his Maker upon much nobler Motives, than those of mere Necessity; he was religious out of free Choice, and not through Compulsion; his Piety was not the Effect of Fear only, but founded upon Principle; his Devotion was not the Offspring of Ignorance, but the Result of the most deliberate Reason. This then being in all Probability, the true Disposition of *Abel's* Mind, who need wonder that God was pleased to look down upon *Abel* with a propitious, approving Countenance? For as it is the inward Disposition of the Man, that renders his Offering acceptable upon God's Altar, so it was in this true and pious Frame of Mind, that *Abel* seems to have excelled; to the *Firstlings of his Flock* he added the First-fruits of his Life; and all the while his Victim was upon the Altar, his righteous Soul was breathing out her inmost self to *the Father of Mercies, and God of all Comforts*. *Abel's* Offering, even though it was the Pride of all his Flock, and the Fat thereof, yet this was the least Part of his Oblation; it was the chearful Readiness with which he offered it; it was the unaffected Piety of an honest sincere Heart, which, in the Sight of God, is of great Price, and more than all whole Burnt Offerings and Sacrifices. And if I were disposed to deal in Types, and to strike out some

some Christian Doctrine or other, out of every Passage in the Old Testament, I think the Offering of *Abel* may, to an inquisitive Reader, afford a figurative Representation of the Sacrifice of the Son of God ; or at least, whether *Abel*, when he was so very curious in the Choice of his Offering, and brought to God's Altar one of the Prime, or Firstlings of his Flock, did not, in this his own Offering, foresee the Necessity of the grand Atonement, or great Peace-Offering of the Son of God, let the Reader judge. *Abel's* Lamb was the first, that we know of, which was offered upon God's Altar ; and I cannot think but *Abel*, by this understood the great Peace-Offering of that immaculate Lamb that was slain, or appointed to die, in Man's Stead, from the Foundation of the World. The Reason of *Abel* must tell him, that his own Offering could not of itself take away Sin ; and consequently, must point out to some more perfect one that could. *Abel's* Lamb, though the Pride and Glory of all his Flock, and in its own Nature, one of the most meek, gentle, and harmless of all other Creatures ; still for all this, it could have no Efficacy or Merit to atone for the Sins of its Owner. The gentle Nature, and innocent Meekness of the Lamb, made it, without Doubt, a very proper Emblem of the *Lamb of God, which was slain for the Sins of the World* ; but then, the Lamb was no more than the Emblem, or figurative
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Representation of some greater and better Offering, that could take away Sin. There must (as *Abel's* Reason no doubt told him) be some very wise End to answer by God's enjoining the Offering of slain Beasts upon his Altar. And though one Reason hereof was in Token of Man's Obedience and Gratitude to God, the bounteous Author of all his Blessings; yet, as God neither stood in need of any such Returns from Man, and could, if he had pleased, have prescribed other Offerings enough, besides that of the Sacrifice of Lambs, or other living Creatures; and since we cannot but know that Providence, for the most Part, makes one and the same Thing to answer many wise Purposes; so, from these Considerations put together, it appears very evident, that, when God prescribed to Mankind the Sacrifice of living Creatures, and of the Lamb in particular, it was to be both as a Token of Man's Gratitude and Obedience, and, by the Sacrifice and Blood of the Lamb, to point out to him the Necessity and Comfort of the Sacrifice and Death of the Son of God, that glorious Paschal Lamb, of which all others, before offered, were undoubtedly certain Types, and very significant Representations. But, however this Matter may be; yet *Abel's* Offering, the Subject of my present Inquiry, was, as we find, propitiouly accepted of God; and we have seen likewise why it was so, viz. because both
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the Offering, and him that offered it, had every Requisite to recommend them to the Favour and Acceptance of Heaven. As to the Offering itself, it was the * choicest and best that *Abel* had in his Power, and to his Offering he joined unaffected Piety and Sincerity of Heart.

As therefore we have seen what it was that recommended *Abel's* Offering to God's Favour, I am in the next Place to inquire, whence it came to pass that *Cain's* Offering did not meet with the like favourable Acceptance. The main Reason hereof, God himself declares to *Cain* in these Words, *If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted; and if thou doest not well, Sin lieth at the Door.* Here God plainly tells *Cain*, that the Reason why his Offering was not accepted, was his own great Unworthiness. It was his wicked Life that hindered his Gift at God's Altar, from being received with Favour. *Cain* did not bring with the Fruit of his Ground, the Fruits of a good Life; he only made a mere outward formal Offering; and did even this more out of Restraint than Choice: He did not bring with his Offering a willing Mind, and a chearful, pious Disposition. He knew he was obliged (in Compliance with God's Pleasure) to bring an Offering of the Fruits of the Ground to his Creator, but this

* Ex optimis optima elegit.

Cain did out of mere Necessity, and not like his Brother *Abel*, upon a true Principle of Religion. *Cain* does not seem to have brought his Gift to the Altar so much out of Gratitude and Choice, as through Fear and constrained Obedience. He does not appear to have presented his Offering with a chearful liberal Hand, or out of Gratitude and Thankfulness to the Author of Nature; but he did it with a kind of niggardly grudging Air, as if he thought whatever he brought to God's Altar, was more than enough; and that if so be, he did but offer up to God at all, he was thereby acquitted, as having outwardly complied with the legal or positive Command: For that even *Adam*, and all his Posterity, were obliged, by the Command of Heaven, to repair at certain Seasons to offer up something at God's Altar, in Token from whom they received every Blessing, no Man can reasonably doubt. Thus far therefore it was that *Cain* just barely complied with what he could not help; but further than this outside Mockery, *Cain* did not go. His only Reason for repairing to God's Altar was, through Fear of Punishment for his Neglect, and not upon that noble Principle of Love and Gratitude to his Maker. He only did it (as, God knows, Thousands now do) because others did the same; but with regard to the true Meaning and Design of a religious Offering, *Cain* appears to have been grossly negligent.

gent. And that this was one of *Cain's Crimes*, I learn from the Account we have of his Manner of bringing his Offering, *Gen. IV. 3.* And in Process of Time it came to pass, that *Cain brought of the Fruit of the Ground, an Offering unto the Lord*; which Account seems to imply, that *Cain* was very careless and negligent what kind of Offering it was, if so be, he did but offer at all. He did not (like his righteous Brother) bring to God's Altar, the best Things he was possessed of, but took the first that came to his Hand: Whereas *Cain*, being a Tiller of the Ground, his Offering should have been of the prime Fruits thereof, and not (as is generally supposed) the Refuse of his Heap. And to this Sense of *Cain's Offering*, the *Greek Translation* of the 7th Verse agrees, which, rendered in *English*, is as follows * : "If thou would'st have of-

* A more literal Translation of the *Greek* would run thus: "If thou hast offered right, but at the same time not divided rightly, hast thou not offended? Hold thy Peace." Οὐκ ἴσας ὀφθῶς προσένηκας, ὀφθῶς δὲ πρὸ δίκης, ἡμαρτίη; ἡδοναίῃ. Some Commentators are of Opinion, that this Version does by no means take in the true genuine Sense of *Moses*, in the Passage before us, And the Reader will see, that though I have hitherto followed the Sense of the *Greek Interpreters* of this Passage, yet I have also considered it, as it relates to the Disposition of *Cain*, when he made his Offering, as well as when he set his *Fruits of the Ground* apart for that sacred Purpose. And I cannot help remarking, from God's Reply to *Cain*, upon his Resentment at his Offering's

“fered right, oughtest thou not to have di-
 “vided so too? But in this thou hast erred;
 “therefore forbear to murmur.” For *Cain*,
 when he was about to make his Offering,
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fering's not being accepted, how studiously, as it were,
 the Almighty cautions his earthly Subjects against that
 most absurd and hypocritical Notion, the *Opus operatum*,
 first prevalling amongst the *Jews*, and since carried, if
 possible, to greater Lengths by those who stile them-
 selves the only true Catholic Christians. But what most
 excites our Wonder, is, that the more ancient *Jews*
 should lay so much Stress upon *legal* Righteousness, when
 they had before them, in the History of *Cain*, such a
 remarkable Caution against that Sort of mock Reli-
 gion, as consisted in the mere *doing* of a Thing only,
 without taking in the Intention of the Agent. For we
 learn, from the very first Offering left upon Record,
 and from its Non-acceptance, that it is not enough just
 barely to comply with a positive Command, unless a
 pious and honest Intention accompanies that Compli-
 ance: Neither is the most punctual and rigorous Ob-
 servance of Religious Ceremonies of any Esteem in the
 Eyes of the great Searcher of Hearts, when that Act
 of Religion goes no deeper than an outside Sanctity.
 This was the very *Crime of Cain*; he was by no means
 defective as to *legal* Righteousness, but in inward Sin-
 cerity: He was not an impious Man, but then he was
 a Hypocrite. He was very ready to bring his Offering
 to God's Altar; and is never once taxed with any irre-
 verent Behaviour during the Solemnity of his Offering;
 nay, and possibly he might wear a more sanctified Look
 than his Brother *Abel*; but then *Cain's* Devotion went
 no further than his Countenance; and forasmuch as his
 Offering was not the pure Result of a pious and sincere
 Heart, it could meet with no Acceptance from that om-
 niscient Being, who knoweth the Thoughts of Man
 long before; and in every Act of Religion, his Command
 is, *My Son, give me thine HEART.*

took the Refuse of his Corn for his Maker, and reserved the best for his own Use. Thus one Reason of *Cain's* Offering being rejected, was on Account of his sordid, mercenary Temper; he was for offering to the Lord his God, of that which cost him nothing; and was in itself of no Value to *Cain*, had it not been offered at all. Not that the great Author of all Things wants any Thing at the Hands of Man; neither, in Respect of the divine Being, is the most pompous and costly Offering at all regarded; all Offerings being in themselves as nothing to Him who stands in need of nothing. But as the Disposition of the Man is to be seen from the Manner in which the Offering is chosen; so it was here that *Cain* most fatally erred. His Offering betrayed a covetous sordid Temper; to Covetousness he added manifest and vile Hypocrisy; and while he presented his Offering at the Altar, his Heart was far gone astray from his bounteous Creator. And this appearing to have been the very Case with *Cain*, we need be under no Surprize that the Offering of such an one was *an Abomination to the Lord*. Let it be observed, from this History of *Cain's* irreligious and stupid Conduct, that in God's rejecting his Offering, we have a standing Lesson against every Act of Covetousness and Hypocrisy, especially in Things pertaining unto God. And lest Mankind, in future Ages, should plead Ignorance of the true Meaning
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and Design of religious Offerings, God, we see, in his Dealings with *Cain*, left the most early Caution upon Record against Hypocrisy in Religion. And in this History of the second of Men, we are taught the Heinousness of that vile pharisaical Crime of *drawing nigh unto God with our Lips, when our Hearts are far from him*. God, we see, was determined that Mankind should be apprized, from the very Beginning of Time, how vile and how dangerous a Thing it is not to be sincere in Matters of Religion: That Hypocrisy is in its very Nature vile and base, we are ready enough to allow; and that it is a very dangerous Crime, the Sequel of *Cain's* History is but too sad an Instance. His Covetousness was indeed the Root of all his future Ills; but his Hypocrisy was that which made God himself his Enemy. His Covetousness was the Cause of his Hypocrisy, and what a sad Train of Disasters, *Cain's* base Dissimulation with his God afterwards brought on, first, his murmuring against God, for preferring *Abel's* Offering to his own, then, in Revenge, the Murdering of his Brother, and, as a Punishment for this shocking Crime, *Cain's* being for ever banished from the Presence of God, are as so many fearful Proofs left upon everlasting Record, for the merciful Warning of all future Ages. So that upon the closing up of this Affair, we see what an unpardonable Crime is Want of Sincerity in the solemn

Duties of Religion. And let this convince us of the Equity of God's Dealings with Hypocrites, when he consigns them over to that Land of eternal Horror, *where there is Weeping, and Wailing, and Gnashing of Teeth.*

SECTION V.

THE atrocious Crime of *Cain*, in the Murder of his Brother, paved the Way to the most shocking Enormities, and not only amongst the Descendants of this impious Assassin, but the Contagion spread by Degrees to the rest of *Adam's* Posterity in the Line of *Seth*. This melancholy Truth is too well attested by the following Piece of sacred History. *And it came to pass, when Men began to multiply on the Face of the Earth, and Daughters were born unto them, that the Sons of God saw the Daughters of Men that they were fair, and they took them Wives of all which they chose. And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with Man, for that he also is Flesh; yet his Days shall be an hundred and twenty Years.*

As these Words are the Preface to one of the deepest Tragedies the World ever beheld, and foretel an Event that makes human Nature shudder to think of, it will be necessary

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(in order to vindicate the Justice of God in that Procedure) to explain every particular Member of this Passage of the inspired Writer. And first, I shall enquire what People we are to understand by those *Men*, which (as the first Verse observes) *began to multiply on the Face of the Earth, and had Daughters born unto them.* For that these were a different People from those mentioned in the next Verse, is very evident from the Antithesis, or different Appellations; one of them being called *Men*, i.e. People, that were wholly immersed in Sensuality and carnal Lusts; the other dignified with the Title of *the Sons of God*. Who then these different People were, shall be shewn in due Order. And first, by the *Men that began to multiply on the Face of the Earth, and had Daughters born unto them*, we are to understand the Posterity of *Cain*, who being banished from the Presence of God, and from his native Country, for the inhuman Murder of his Brother *Abel*, became from that Day a wandering Vagabond upon Earth. And after he had gone about from Place to Place, he at last fixed his Dwelling in the Land of *Nod*, Eastward of *Eden*: And in that Part of the Earth, *Cain* became the Founder of a numerous People, who were quite separated from the other Descendants of *Adam*, in the House, or Line, of *Seth*, whom God gave to *Adam* and *Eve*, instead of their second Son *Abel*, whom *Cain* had slain. *Cain*,

by that atrocious Murder, had not only forfeited the Favour and Protection of Heaven; but he lost, by that malicious Deed, the Right of Primogeniture, and every other natural and civil Privilege; which Right, upon God's Sentence to *Cain*, devolved of Course to his Brother *Seth*, and to his Posterity. So that Mankind were then divided into two very different Lines, or distinct Houses; that of *Seth*, and the other the impious House of *Cain*. For *Cain*, by the Sentence denounced against him for the cruel Assassination of his Brother, and for impudently denying the Fact, and persisting in hardened Impenitence to the last, seems to have been cut off from all future Intercourse with Heaven. He was, I apprehend, left entirely to the Dictates of Sense; for as to Reason and Reflection, these were totally impaired by Guilt; and the thick Mist of Sin had so fatally eclipsed all the higher Faculties of *Cain*, that he had no Sort of Relish for any spiritual Attainments. The Horror of his guilty Mind appeared in his Countenance; and the Stain of his Brother's Blood, was, by God's Appointment, that indelible Mark in his Forehead, which all that afterwards beheld might perceive to be the Crime of Murder written in his Face. And as this Mark set upon *Cain*, was a true Picture of the Guilt and Horror of his Conscience, so it might likewise be wisely designed by Providence, as a Mark of eternal Infamy to himself,

himself, and to deter all that beheld it from committing the like devilish Crime. And by this Means, while this Mark set upon Cain, published his Crime of Murder, it was a Security to him, according to God's Promise, *lest any finding him should kill him.* Cain then being banished from the Land of his Parents and Kindred, was, as has been said, left wholly to be guided by the Dictates of his own Mind; but as this was so fatally clouded with the Mist of Sin, and contracted Ignorance, it is very easy to conceive what would be the Conduct of such a one, and how little remains of true Religion could be expected amongst the miserable Posterity of such a reprobate Parent. And if God, according to his own Rule, afterwards laid down in the Decalogue, punished *the Iniquity of the Father upon his Children to the third and fourth Generation*; how wretched must Cain's unhappy Offspring be? And, considering the Longevity of human Race before the Flood, how many Years did the Children of that first Murderer feel the dreadful Effect of their Parent's Guilt? And though this Punishment may be said to have been only that negative one of leaving them to be governed by their own Imaginations; yet what other Punishment could have been much greater than this, for People to be wholly given up to themselves, and left to the wild and miserable Anarchy of their own deceitful Hearts?

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But however this may be, no sober Reader can doubt, but that divine Vengeance pursued *Cain* into the Land of *Nod*; and notwithstanding this Vengeance, contrary to the since commonly received Opinion, suffered the Murderer yet to live, still that very Life itself was one of *Cain*'s greatest present Torments; and in all Probability, some judicial Punishment or other from Heaven, was every Day falling down upon his guilty Head, so flagrant a Crime is the Murder of our Fellow-Creatures, and so dreadful and sure is the Punishment that always attends it, even in this World! Of this sad Truth, the History of *Cain*, and his Posterity, is the most early and fearful Instance. For after *Cain* was banished to the Land of *Nod*, and had there built a City, and called it after the Name of his Son *Enoch*, (not that *Enoch* who walked with God) it is easy to conjecture to what Height of Impiety the wicked Posterity of *Cain* would, in all Probability, arrive, as they were, in Consequence of their Father's Crimes, judicially left to follow the wild Track of Sense, and carnal Indulgences. And even supposing this judicial Punishment withheld; yet what, in the very Nature of Things, could be expected, from a Race of People sprung from such an impious Father, but that the Father's Example would be too closely followed by his unhappy Offspring? *Cain* himself was utterly estranged from his God, and consequently

was neither disposed, nor indeed capable, of instructing his Children in any true Principles of Virtue and Religion. For as *Cain* while he was within what I may call the Pales of the original Church, was a professed Hypocrite, as appears by his insincere Manner of bringing his Offering to God's Altar, what must he be after he was expelled out of that first Synagogue? For if *Cain* was in secret League with the Adversary of God and Man, while he was within the Bosom of God's House; if in his Heart he was fallen off from the Worship of his Maker, and privately gone over to the Service and Interest of another Party, what less could be expected from this confirmed Apostate from Heaven, after he had, by the Murder of his Brother, forfeited the Protection of Providence, and, as such, a Reprobate denounced, than the most atrocious Wickedness that a Wretch wholly under the Influence of evil Spirits could be guilty of? And this, as it laid the Foundation of all the monstrous Crimes that followed in the old World, so it is at the same Time a full Vindication of the Justice of the divine Procedure, in the Vengeance that was afterwards inflicted upon the whole House of *Cain*. For as *Cain*, either self-tempted, or by the Instigation of the grand Deceiver, first fell off from the Service and Love of God, and then, through Malice and Envy, committed a Deed that makes Nature shudder to think of, he

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by this Means (in the very Nature of Things) ceased to be any longer a Subject of Heaven, or worthy of God's Care and Protection for the future. For it is a Truth, founded in the eternal Fitness of Things, that whoever wilfully and maliciously (which was *Cain's* very Case) withdraws his Faith and Allegiance from Heaven, from that very Moment forfeits the Protection of the Power he has offended. For in this Case, the Man reprobates himself, and so long as he obstinately persists in that Rebellion against Heaven, so long is he an Object of divine Wrath: And if, in spite of all the Efforts of God's Grace, and the various Lectures of the Holy Spirit, he still perversely lives and dies under the Guilt of wilful and unrepented Disobedience to the Laws of God, and of right Reason, that Man is utterly excluded from Pardon, and must eternally remain in some Place, far removed from a God of infinite Purity and Holiness. For this is the Punishment which the original Covenant loudly denounces; neither is this eternal Punishment of unrepented Impiety, any arbitrary or rigorous Sentence of the Almighty, but it is a Punishment unavoidably resulting from the eternal Fitness of Things, and the unchangeable Nature of the Divine Being, who can never, consistent with his own glorious Attributes, admit that Man to his Pardon, who leaves the World in a malicious and avowed Rebellion to the King of Heaven.

And

And as there can be no Medium in a future State, between Heaven and Hell, Happiness and Misery, or, to come nearer to the Point in Hand, as there cannot possibly be any other State of Government in the next World, but that of a Theocracy in the very strict Sense of the Word, and that of a Demonocracy, so the Man, who has all along lived in open Rebellion against God, and been a Slave to *Satan* in this World, must live and continue under the same Master, in the Regions of eternal Darkness. For as it is impossible, in the very Nature of Things, for a Man in this World, to serve both God and Mammon; so as true it is and as agreeable to the fixed and unalterable Laws of Nature, that a Man who serves Mammon here to the last, must eternally continue the miserable Slave of that cruel Monster hereafter.

These Things therefore being duly stated, we shall be the better enabled to judge of the Equity of God's Proceedings, in the future Punishment of hardened, impenitent Sinners. And of this very Stamp, were the Descendants of the House of *Cain*: They were, even upon Principle, Rebels to God and his righteous Laws, and consequently were no longer under the Protection of Heaven, but exposed by their own Folly and Ingratitude to the Snares of the Devil. But yet, for all this monstrous Rebellion against God, he did not of a long Time give the wicked House of *Cain* entirely
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over for lost, but tried every possible Expedient to reclaim that dissolute Race of Men, from their own destructive Errors, and the fatal Delusions of the grand Deceiver: This will appear, when we come to consider more severely those various Methods of Providence, which were, in all Probability, often tried to reclaim the House of *Cain* from their Iniquity, before God proceeded to that fearful Punishment, in which the whole House of *Cain*, not so much as one single Person escaping, perished in a Moment; and in which universal Ruin all the Race of Mankind, (eight Persons excepted) were swallowed up in the great Gulph of Waters.

For though it is evident that *Cain*, from his first falling off from God, did, by that impious Act of Rebellion, forfeit all the Privileges of a Subject of Heaven; yet such, and so great, was God's Love and Tenderness for his Creatures, that he would not entirely give the wicked House of *Cain* over to the cruel Tyranny and Dominion of the Prince of Darkness. *Cain*, though he had, on his Part, forfeited the Favour and Protection of God, and was openly and maliciously gone over to the Party of the grand Deceiver, yet he was still a Native Subject of the King of Heaven: And, notwithstanding he was, for his Crimes and Treason, banished, he was still the Subject of his first lawful Prince, and might, whenever God thought proper, be recalled; and,

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upon Condition of his sincere Submission and future Obedience, be restored to the Protection and Favour of his mighty Sovereign, the great Prince of Princes. And therefore, such was the Compassion of God, that he was pleased, in Process of Time, by various Efforts of Grace, as well as by a sad Variety of Calamities, when the gentler Methods of Love were despised, to try whether or no *Cain*, and his abandoned Offspring, could not at length be reclaimed from that tragical End, which, if they did not repent and turn unto God, was decreed against them. And therefore no Doubt can be made, but in order to bring about the Conversion of the Posterity of *Cain*, God made use of the most effectual and natural Means to open their Eyes, and to dispel that thick Mist of Ignorance and Guilt, which they had contracted by their own dissolute Lives, as well as from the Infection of the Crimes of *Cain*, their impious Ancestor.

We must indeed own that the Scriptures are almost silent in this Affair; neither is it reasonable to expect any Relation of these Matters, when the Wisdom of God has, in the most astonishing and miraculous Conciseness, penned the History of above two thousand Years in ten short Chapters; and in which beauteous Compendium, there are set down the greatest and most marvellous Events that human Reason is capable of conceiving.

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But however, though it would be a Task unworthy of the Holy Spirit, to give a minute and tedious Detail of Actions, that are rather historical, than Points of Faith and necessary Doctrine; yet the Word of Inspiration has left us Hints enow upon Record, as a Foundation to build upon, as well as a glorious Incentive to that sublimest and most entertaining of all other Employments, a careful Study of the Oracles of God. One manifest Hint of this Nature, contained in the Word of Inspiration, is given us in that sacred Compendium, already mentioned, the first ten Chapters of *Genesis*; which Chapters can never be too carefully read, nor too often explained. And this will be a sufficient Apology for dwelling so long, in opening the Meaning of these primæval Records, in which are contained, though obscurely, most of the Outlines of that glorious Religion, which has brought Life and Immortality to Light, in a clearer View.

The first Hint then, left us upon Record, to shew that God tried various Methods of Love, and of Severity, to reclaim the House of *Cain*, is in that of the Longevity, or surprising Age of Mankind before the Flood; for we find, in the fifth Chapter of *Genesis*, that the common Term of Man's natural Life was near a thousand Years in the Line of *Seth*; and there are stronger Reasons by far, to suppose the Descendants of *Cain* might be permitted to live to as great an Age. Now what could

could be the principal Reason, why the natural Term of Man's Life before the Flood, was extended to such a vast Number of Years, but to afford them an Opportunity of Repentance? And no one can reasonably doubt, but that, during that immense Tract of Time, which the *Antediluvians* lived, God, in great Mercy, tried an infinite Variety of Methods to prevail with that dissolute Race of Men, to renounce the Error of their Ways. For tho' Length of Time is nothing to the great *Antient of Days*, with whom *a thousand Years is as one Day, and one Day as a thousand Years*; yet when we speak of Time, as applied to Man in his probationary State, the Thing is quite different. Nor could the great Age of Men before the Deluge, be wholly attributed to the natural Robustness of Mankind, and the great Nourishment of the Fruits of the Earth, then almost in its Prime; but this great Age of the *Antediluvians* was undoubtedly a providential Act of the divine Being, that Mankind, in that long Period of Time, might learn, even by their own repeated Observations, the great Difference between Virtue and Vice, Good and Evil. And as they could not help, without a monstrous Abuse of Reason, and an utter Neglect of all Manner of Observation, but see and judge what was right and wrong, what was, and must be agreeable to the divine Being, as well as what could not be so: Therefore, if for all

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these long continued Opportunities of Self-conviction; the Descendants of *Cain* still continued under the dark Dominion of Sin, and its Author the Devil, the Justice of God could not be impeached of Rigour, had he proceeded to take Vengeance upon them many Centuries before the general Deluge did arrive. But yet for all this, God, who is unwilling that any of his Creatures should perish, but that all should repent and live, did not let the Matter rest here; nor, because the Posterity of *Cain* would not make use of their own Reason, or at all consider the Danger they were in, did Heaven, even then, give that dissolute Race over for lost. God sent to them, no Doubt, by various Messengers, to apprize them of the great Heinousness of their hardened Rebellion against him, and of the tragical Scene that was approaching, in Case they still continued deaf and incorrigible. But, as it will perhaps be difficult to guess, from what Quarter these Messages of God's future Vengeance were sent, and who the Persons could be, that were employed on such an unwelcome and dangerous Errand, I shall endeavour to clear up this Matter as fully as the Nature of so intricate a Subject will admit. And first, let the Reader be pleased to observe, that, after the Banishment of *Cain*, the World was divided into two different Lines, or Houses; and that these two Lines were under quite opposite Forms of Government,

ment, both in Church and State. The House of *Seth* was, for some Time at least, under that Model of Government, which may be justly stiled a Theocracy, and perhaps the only Plan of Government since the Fall of Man, that, in Propriety of Language, can be called by that Title. And the House of *Cain*, as it had fallen away from that glorious Form of Government, in which God was visibly supreme; so it may, upon that Account, not improperly be said to have put itself under a Demonocracy, where the implacable Adversary to God and Man, was the limited Tyrant.

This then being premised, it will be easy to conceive, that these two different Houses would be in a perpetual State of War one with the other. And as, upon the Seduction of *Adam*, the Devil was encouraged to set up his infernal Standard in the World, in Hopes of erecting his Kingdom, in Spite and Defiance of Heaven itself; so he was but too successful in gaining over inconsiderate Man to his Party and Interest. And the first that was born of Woman, was so fatally overseen, by the Subtilty of the old Serpent, as to forfeit his Faith and Allegiance to the King of Heaven, and, as a just Punishment of his Crimes, was banished out of the Theocracy, and from that unhappy Day wilfully put himself under the Power and Dominion of the opposite Party.

This, therefore, being the deplorable State of *Cain*, after the Murder of his Brother, and, as his miserable Offspring were under the wild Mis-rule of mere Sense, it was not possible for Men, thus enthralled under the dark Dominion of *Satan*, to regain their former Liberty, without some one to open their Eyes, to represent to them the real Misery of their captive State, and the unavoidable Danger of still continuing deluded Vassals to the Prince of Hell. What Method therefore was to be pursued, to bring about their Conversion? Miracles, that abandoned Race could not expect; neither indeed were the Descendants of *Cain* capable of judging in Matters of this Nature, nor had they any Reason to hope that God would vouchsafe to forward their Conversion, by sending to them immediate Messengers from Heaven: So that, the Conversion of the House of *Cain* could not, in the common Course of Things, be so much as expected from any other Quarter, but from the earnest Endeavours, and pious Exhortations of some one amongst their Fellow-Creatures, who had escaped the Temptations of the grand Deceiver, and yet retained their Fidelity and Submission to the Laws of God. These then were the Descendants of *Seth*, amongst whom the Worship of the divine Being still continued; and who, upon that Account, are called the *Sons of God*, in Contradistinction to the wicked Posterity of *Cain*, described

described under the Appellation, not of Sons, or Worshipers of the true God, but of mere Men, who, as such, were wholly immersed in sensual and carnal Lusts.

As therefore the Descendants of *Seth* were the only Worshipers of the true God, so they were, I make no Doubt, frequently commissioned to go and preach to their apostate Brethren of the House of *Cain*, in order to convince them of the great Sin of living in open Rebellion against God, and to forewarn them of approaching Vengeance, unless they speedily repented. This may perhaps be thought to have been both an arduous, and a dangerous Undertaking, no Doubt but so it might be; yet as God, in great Mercy to the Wicked, often exposes the Lives of good Men, so it was between the House of *Seth*, and the profane Posterity of *Cain*. And, though the Scriptures don't set down all the particular Transactions between the Descendants of *Seth*, and the wicked House of *Cain*, yet they expressly mention *Enoch* and *Noah* by Name, as commissioned by Heaven, to preach Repentance to the House of *Cain*, as well as to their own Brethren in the Line of *Seth*, after they became corrupted with the Abominations of the profane Posterity of their elder Brother. For, that *Enoch* frequently called upon the hardened Sinners of his own Times, to repent and amend, and denounced the fearful Sentence of God's approaching

Vengeance, in Case they still continued incorrigible, we have the Testimony of St Jude in the following Words: *And Enoch also, the Seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold the Lord cometh with ten Thousands of his Saints, to execute Judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly Deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard Speeches, which ungodly Sinners have spoken against him.* There is likewise sufficient Reason to conclude, from the exalted Character given of *Enoch*, (*Gen. V. 24.*) that he had too much Zeal for the Honour of God and his Laws, to be wholly silent, when he saw Profaneness and Infidelity making such horrid Strides, not only amongst the Descendants of *Cain*, but likewise amongst his own Kindred in the Line of *Seth*. The Word of Inspiration gives *Enoch* this noble Testimony, that *he walked with God*; that is, he rendered himself acceptable and well-pleasing to the divine Being, by a Life of uniform Obedience and steady Virtue: *Ἐννεγκεν Ἐνὼχ τῷ Θεῷ*, says the *Greek Translation*. His unfeigned Piety made him a constant Attendant at the publick Worship of his Creator; and his Virtue, which is but another Word for invincible Courage, made him indefatigable in combating national Vice, and in using every possible Expedient to stem out that rapid Torrent of Profaneness,

faneness, which was ready to sweep down all that dared to stand in its Way.

This laudable Boldness in *Enoch* compleated the Character of a great and good Man, and made him in all Respects a fit Person for reclaiming the abandoned House of *Cain*, and, if possible, to prevail with that dissolute Race of Men, to quit that cruel State of Bondage under the Demonocracy, and to put themselves again under that happy Dominion, where Obedience was a Pleasure, and Service the Perfection of Freedom. Besides, we cannot fix upon any of the venerable Fathers of the old World so proper for encountering atrocious Impiety, (like that of *Cain's* Offspring, which was committed upon Principle) as this illustrious Champion; who, for his exalted Piety and unshaken Fidelity to his Maker, was the first that passed to Life without going through the gloomy Regions of Death; and by this illustrious Apotheosis, gave a Hint to the Sons of *Adam*, how gloriously they were designed to have passed from this nether Orb to the Mansions of God, had not Man, by Sin, let Death and Misery into the World. And since this mighty Patriarch was thus eminently distinguished for his inviolable Attachment to the Laws of Heaven, little Doubt can be made, but his unfeigned Zeal for the Honour of his Maker, and the true Interest of his Fellow-Creatures, prompted him to be very assiduous in promoting them both

to the utmost of his Power. *Enoch's* Heart was too much in earnest to be only a lazy, faint Well-wisher of the Happiness of Mankind (which is, I think, of all Characters the most unworthy a Christian, and a Man of Sense) but to the Sincerity of his Wishes, he united his indefatigable Endeavours, to rouse a guilty World from its astonishing Lethargy of brutal Sensuality.

But since the Sequel of the sacred Story shews, that this great Ambassador from Heaven could not stop the mad Career of Vice, but might perhaps, in Length of Time, have been in Danger himself of being swept down by the rapid Tide of outrageous Impiety, or at least of falling a Martyr to his Integrity; God, who alone knows how far the Constancy of his Creatures will hold out, was pleased to take from a guilty World a Man, of whom it was no longer worthy.

The next venerable Preacher to the old World, whom the Word of Inspiration mentions by Name, was * *Noah*. *Noah* has this high Encomium, that he *was* † *perfect in his Generation*: Nay, and in another Place he has this noble Testimony, given him by the Lip of Eternal Truth: *Thee have* ‡ *I seen righteous before me in this Generation*. For a Man to be righteous and honest in any Age, is undoubtedly a very amiable Character; but

* II Epist. Pet. cap. ii. 5.

† Gen. vi. 9.

‡ Gen. vii. 1.

but for a Man to be singularly virtuous, and to combat Vice and Profaneness, against the outrageous Torrent of a whole impious World, is a noble Instance of true heroic Piety, and affords a Sight, which the Angels of Heaven, those Sons of Glory, cannot but admire with Astonishment; and which even God himself beholds with a well-pleased Approbation.

The exalted Characters of the *Antediluvian* Preachers were not, I thought, to be passed over in Silence; because when God made Choice of such illustrious Ministers to preach unto the People of the old World, that People could have no Shadow of Excuse for still persisting in all Manner of impious Abominations: And for this Reason that tragical Event which followed, was no more than a necessary Consequence of such long repeated, and even invincible Profaneness, unless God had thought fit to compel the Men of the old World, (*vi & metu*) to forsake their Crimes in spite of their own Inclinations: But this is a Method of Proceeding, as much inconsistent with the Wisdom and Honour of the Great Creator, as with the Liberty and free Agency of all his Creatures, and therefore it is never to be expected. But to return to *Noah*, the venerable Prophet of the old World, who, as is evident from † *St Peter*, was the eighth Preacher,

† *St Pet Epist. II. chap. ii. v. 5.* Ὁ ὁδοὺς Νῦν διὰ τὴν αἰῶνα Κήρυμα. Or, as the Sense would seem to require, the

Preacher, commissioned by Heaven, to reclaim the Wickedness of the old World. For, that he was invested with a public Character, both the Title *Kēguz* given him by the Apostle, and the Nature of the Thing, sufficiently intimate. And that the Word Eight (*ὀγδοὺς*) cannot be so properly applied to Noah's Descent, as to his public Character of a Prophet, or Preacher, is abundantly evident to any one that is tolerably conversant in studying the Oracles of God. For Noah, as to his natural Descent from Adam, was not the eighth (reckoned inclusively) but the tenth Person, as you will easily find by looking into the fifth Chapter of *Genesis*. And the Argument, given by several Commentators, to prove that the Apostle's Words, *ὀγδοὺς γενεαίαις*, relate to his natural Descent from Adam, as being the eighth Person, is more surprising than the Assertion itself. For, though it should be granted these Men, that Adam, for his Transgression, was struck out of the Number; yet to affirm, in order to make Noah the eighth Person, that Lamech was not to be reckoned, *ob duplex homicidium*; (seeing by his own Confession, *Gen. IV. 23.* he did not deserve so distinguishing a Character) is a very extraordinary Oversight; because that Lamech, in the Words should rather be thus placed: *Νῶς δὲ γενεαίαις ὀγδοὺς*. And how "the eighth Person" crept into the *English* Translation, instead of the eighth Preacher, is not easily to be accounted for.

in the Line of *Seth*, was neither guilty of the Crime of Murder, nor could he be the same Person with him, mentioned *Gen. IV.* who was a Descendant from the wicked House of *Cain*.

That *Noah* therefore was the eighth public commissioned Preacher amongst the *Antediluvians*, seems still further deducible from the Account we have of *Enos*, in whose Time Men began to call upon the Name of the Lord, *Gen. IV. 26.* That is, the House of *Seth* began then to acknowledge themselves Worshipers of the true God, in Contradistinction to the impious and profane Descendants of *Cain*, amongst whom, there was not, in all Probability, the least Remains of religious Worship, and who were, upon that Account, considered by the inspired Writer, as Sensualists, and mere Men without God amongst them, and, as such, left to follow the brutal Paths of every carnal Gratification. For it cannot be supposed (as some ignorantly enough have done) that, from the Fall of *Adam*, and his Expulsion out of *Eden*, to the Days of *Enos*, there were no Remains of religious Worship, since the contrary is evident from the Account of *Cain* and *Abel's* bringing their respective Offerings to God's Altar. Neither can it be imagined, that after the Murder of righteous *Abel*, and the Curse and Banishment of *Cain* for that horrid Deed, all religious Worship was wholly laid aside till the Days of *Enos*.

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For, as *Adam* had several other Offspring long before *Abel* was murdered, and his Brother banished, (else whence could *Cain* take a Wife?) so it cannot be supposed, but that *Adam* would be as careful in keeping alive a true Sense of divine Worship amongst the rest of his Children, as he had done before, especially as such a sad Disaster had happened in his Family by the vile Hypocrisy of *Cain*, and his monstrous Abuse of religious Sacrifices.

This then being premised, we shall easily understand the true Construction of *Gen. IV. 26.* where it is said, that in the Days of *Enos*, Men began to be called by the Name of the Lord; that is, the Descendants of *Adam*, in the Line of *Seth*, began then to acknowledge themselves Worshipers of *Jehovah*, and as such, might probably stile themselves *Jehovahans*. Not but that the Descendants of *Adam*, in the Line of *Seth*, were all along Worshipers of the true God, and had, from the Beginning of Time, the same Right to this sacred Title. But, as we know that the Disciples of Christ were not distinguished by the glorious Title of Christians, till a long Time after they were true Professors of Christianity, thus it seems to have been with Regard to the Worshipers of the true God, in the Line of *Seth*. And as the Disciples of Christ were called Christians first at † *Antioch*, being then neither afraid, nor ashamed to acknowledge

† Acts xi. 26.

knowledge to what Master they belonged, and whose Title they wore, in Contradistinction to the Jews and Heathens; so it appears to me no forced Conjecture, that, in the Days of *Enos*, the Descendants of *Adam* were first in religious, as well as civil Matters, distinguished by different Titles. The Houses of *Seth* and *Enos* were not afraid publicly to avow, that they were Worshipers of the true God, or *Jehovabans*; and it is perhaps not improbable, but that the grand Opposer of God, and Seducer of foolish Man, might prompt the Posterity of *Cain* to assume the Title of *Anti-jehovabans*, or some other blasphemous and supercilious Appellation, whereby to alienate the Affections of the Descendants of *Cain* from their Brethren, in the Line of *Seth*; and by that odious Distinction of Words, perpetuate the Hatred and Discord between the two Houses. But as it is dangerous to go too far in the dark, bewildered Paths of mere Conjecture, I shall pursue this unsafe Journey no farther, but turn out of it into the Road, which the Word of Inspiration seems to point out.

Now it is evident, from sacred Authority, that *Noah* was a commissioned Prophet to the People of the old World; and that he was likewise the eighth venerable Patriarch, which was invested with that public Character of an Ambassador from Heaven; and consequently it seems highly probable, not to say quite certain,

certain, that as *Noah* was the eighth and last Preacher to the old World, so *Enos* was the first. It was in his Time that Religion was first publickly preached, and the Worshipers of the true God distinguished from their profane and abandoned Brethren in the Line of *Cain*, by the sacred Title of *Jehovahans*, or Sons of God. And I think it is not unreasonable to suppose, but that *Enos*, as well as the rest of the Patriarchs, in the Line of *Seth*, down to *Noah*, were frequently sent to the wicked Posterity of *Cain* to represent to that abandoned People the great Folly and Danger of their shocking Impieties, and to forewarn them of God's fearful Judgments, if they would not in Time forsake their horrid Provocations. For, that God had often apprized the Descendants of *Cain* of his fearful approaching Vengeance, in Case they still continued deaf to his merciful Warnings, is very evident from what he himself affirms in these Words, *My Spirit shall not always strive with Man*: Which Words have a retrospect Sense, and plainly denote that God had tried every possible Method in order to reclaim that dissolute People. And, amongst these Methods, that of God's sending to them, by his Servants in the House of *Seth*, was undoubtedly one. The Descendants of *Seth* were, at that Time, the only Men, amongst whom there were any Remains of Religion; and therefore none but them were fit to be employed as Messen-

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gers of God to the wicked House of Cain. And as it has been fully shewn, that, from the Time of Cain's Banishment, Mankind was divided into two different Lines; and that one, the Descendants of Cain, are called the Sons of Men; the Descendants of Seth, by Way of Distinction, the Sons of God; that is, Worshipers and Servants of the true God: So I shall next shew, that even these Sons, or Servants of the true God, at last gave up their Integrity, and in Time mixed with the abandoned People of the House of Cain, till, by this unhappy Means, the whole Race of Mankind became universally corrupted; which general Corruption, and hardened Perseverance in Sin, provoked God, in spite of his Long-suffering, to destroy every living Creature, (Noah and his Family excepted) from off the Face of the Earth. This Defection of the House of Seth is intimated in these Words, that *the Sons of God, i. e. those Men, who once were sincere Worshipers of the true God, saw the Daughters of Men (the wicked Progeny of Cain) that they were fair, and they took them Wives of all which they chose.* It was this unlawful Mixture of the House of Seth, God's original peculiar People, with the profane People of the Land, that paved the Way to that universal Contempt of Religion and Depravity of Morals, which ended in that fearful Catastrophe, in which the whole World perished by Water. For so long as the House
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of *Seth* kept aloof from the profane Nations, and preserved inviolably a Veneration of God and his Laws, so long God was pleased, even for the Sake of the Descendants of *Seth*, to spare the guilty Offspring of *Cain*. And while the World could produce only ten righteous Persons, it seems for their Sakes to have been respited from that fearful Vengeance, which had, like a dismal black Cloud, been long hovering over a guilty devoted People. But, when those Men, who were God's peculiar People, joined themselves in Marriage to the Daughters of the most dissolute Parents, and were not content with one chaste Partner of the Marriage-bed, but after the wicked Example of *Lamech*, that first libidinous Polygamist, mentioned *Gen. IV.* polluted the sacred conjugal Rites, and by Violence and savage Fierceness, took them Wives of all which their lustful Appetites chose; it was this outrageous Dissoluteness of Morals that called aloud for Vengeance, and even tired out God's great Long-suffering and repeated Loving-kindness, and made him in great Indignation declare, that his *Spirit should not always strive with Man, for that he also is Flesh*. And the true Explanation of what is meant by this carnal Man, we have in the fifth Verse of the VIth Chapter of *Genesis*, viz. *Every Imagination of Man's Heart was only Evil continually*. And when the whole Race of Men, except one single Family, was arrived

to that gigantic Size of daring Profaneness and invincible Folly, what less could be expected than that dreadful Vengeance, which had been so often foretold, but as often ridiculed and despised? And if we would know what those Crimes were that more particularly provoked the Sword of divine Justice, the History of the *Antediluvians*, as recorded in the Beginning of *Genesis*, will acquaint us, that these were an open Contempt of religious Worship, and an avowed Hatred to all the Laws of God and of right Reason. And when Men had once broken down this sacred Fence, and trampled every divine Gift under Foot, what less could be the fearful, but withal, the natural Consequence, than Murders, Rapes, and Adulteries? For when Men are determined to pluck asunder the sacred Ties of Religion, and to set at Defiance all the most solemn Obligations of Duty, Conscience and Reason, the direful Event of such outrageous Impieties ever was, and, in the very Nature of Things, ever will be, dreadful Anarchy, Confusion, and unavoidable Ruin. This is a sad Truth, so fully attested in the History of all Nations that have hitherto come to Light, that to dispute it, would leave it doubtful, whether the Ignorance or Impiety of such a Man was the greatest. And though it is a very invidious Task, and often supposed to be the Effect of a morose, uncharitable Temper, to compare the Vices of former,

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with those of the present Times; yet this is a very unfair Construction of the Matter. For, as it is the indispensable Duty of every Man to discountenance Vice and Folly, what Method so likely to reclaim Men from any mistaken, abandoned Pursuits, as by laying before them, with Honesty and becoming Zeal, the History of former Times, and the certain Vengeance, which, in all Ages of the World, has ever been the Lot, sooner or later, of Profaneness and Immorality. This Method of exposing Vice, and of alarming the guilty, secure Sinner, is so far from being the Effect of a morose, vindictive Temper, that it shews on the contrary, that such a Man has, of all others, the most true Love and Charity for his Fellow-Creatures, because he most consults their truest and best Interest. For if the Folly, Danger, and Deformity of Vice are to be exposed at all, it ought to be done in the most moving and effectual Manner; nor do I know of any Thing so likely to deter Men from Sin, as by bringing back to their View, those fearful Judgments of Heaven, which have, from the very Beginning of Time, been the certain Portion of all flagrant Impiety. This is the Method I have pursued, and, as it appears from the Account laid before you, both of the Crimes and Punishment of the old World, that an universal Contempt of Religion, and a total Corruption of all moral and divine Laws, at last tired out, even the
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Long-suffering of God ; so the Conclusion I would have my Reader draw from this History of the old World, is this ; that in whatever Age or Country, there are Vices parallel to those which have already destroyed one World by Water, these Vices may, if they should still keep increasing, bring on the Dissolution of another by Fire. And if any Judgment is to be formed of a People's Contempt of Religion, from their shameful Profanation of that sacred Day, which is set apart for religious Worship, then (with real Concern I speak it) Scoffers and Despisers of Religion, in this our Island, are not a few. For the Lord's Day is become, in the Language of the Prophet, as one of the common Days : It is with many the peculiar Day set apart for Riot, Gaming, and mad Diversions ; and even with others who are not yet quite so fashionable as to sacrifice common Decency to the growing Custom of Gaming and Drinking away this solemn Day, yet they begin to look upon it as a Day almost lost ; and that it ought to be blotted out of the Kalendar for the future.

And as the World at present is hastening apace to as great Contempt of religious Worship as in former Ages, so that other notorious Crime, which was the fatal Pest that destroyed the old World, seems to threaten approaching Ruin to one Part of the Globe. The Crime meant is that fashionable spreading Evil, of profaning the sacred Marriage-bed,

by living in boasted Adultery and avowed Fornication: Where these Matters will end, or what may ere long be the fatal Catastrophe, God's Wisdom alone can tell. What the Punishment of these Vices were in the old World, can be no Secret to any Man; and what that Vengeance may be, which hovers over this present Age, belongs not to me to determine. And as I have made it my late most careful Endeavours to go, as far as I was able, to the Bottom of Things, and to shew what fearful Vengeance the Crime last mentioned brought in upon the old World, I am not altogether without Hopes, that, when these Things are considered with the Attention which they deserve, we shall take all imaginable Care of our future Conduct. And though, by this Means, we cannot help, or prevent the Crimes of the World in general, yet we may, by God's Assistance, save ourselves from the Wrath to come. And if we are sincere Christians, and have at Heart the real Interest of Mankind, it is our indispensable Duty to pray earnestly to Almighty God, that he would please, in much Mercy, to convert and save all those inconsiderate and deluded People, whose notorious Vices, if not forsaken in Time, may ere long involve themselves and the whole Realm in Misery and Ruin.

SECTION VI.

THAT God tried every possible Expedient to reclaim the Sinners of the old World, before he proceeded to that fearful Vengeance by an universal Deluge, the Reader has already in Part been apprized of: And, that this tremendous Punishment became at last absolutely necessary, will scarcely be denied: But however, in order to prevent any unreasonable Prejudices against the divine Procedure in this astonishing Vengeance, it may not be improper to explain what I would be understood to mean by the absolute Necessity of that fatal Catastrophe. Now every judicial Punishment of Heaven, may be called a necessary Punishment, when all other Methods of Providence have been wilfully slighted, and, by the repeated invincible Obstinacy of a perverse World, rendered, from Time to Time, quite ineffectual.

This then was the very Case with the Men of the old World, as will sufficiently appear, by looking back a very little into the merciful Methods, which God was pleased to take, before he would draw the Sword of Vengeance. God had often signified his Displeasure at the Wickedness of the old World, by a Succession

of commissioned Messengers, which Time after Time, apprized those Delinquents of the Punishment that would undoubtedly be inflicted upon them, unless they would forsake their Abominations, and by Prayer and Supplication, endeavour to appease that divine Wrath, which was already gone out against them. For though that Race of Men was quite inexcusable, even upon the Principles of unassisted Reason, for running into such monstrous Excess of Wickedness; yet God's Goodness was such, that, since they would not give Ear to the Dictates of Reason, but wilfully stifled the most importunate and moving Cries of Conscience, he then assayed, by a second Revelation of his Will, superadded to that primary Law of Reason, to prevail with those inconsiderate Men to shake off the Fetters of Sin, and to rouse themselves up from the fatal Pillow of intoxicating Sensuality. Nor was, as I apprehend, this second Revelation, which God was pleased in much Mercy to publish to the dissolute House of *Cain*, by a regular Succession of eight commissioned Preachers, from *Enos* to *Noah* (inclusively reckoned) only, as some contend, a bare Republication of the primary Law, or Voice of Nature, but a more full, and a more explicit Declaration of God's Pleasure. For, if this Revelation of the divine Being to the abandoned House of *Cain*, was no more than what they might have collected before from
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that original Law of Nature, or Reason, which God had left Man in Possession of after the Fall, then how could it be expected, that Mankind would be rouzed out of the very deep Lethargy of Sin, by a Voice that was too faint and weak, of itself, to keep Men awake, while they were so? For as it is on all Hands allowed to require more violent Medicines to remove any Distemper of the Body, after it is once fixed, than to prevent its first Advances, so it is much the same in all the Distemperatures of the Mind: And there can be but small Hopes that those Arguments which could not prevent the *Antediluvians* from falling into all Manner of shocking Impieties, should afterwards be able to recover them, when they were so deeply sunk down into the fatal Pit of Sin. This great, and difficult Work could not be effected, but by some more powerful Arguments, than any which their own Reason could suggest; this they had wilfully eclipsed by the dark Clouds of Sin; and their Minds were likewise less capable than ever, to see the Weight of such Arguments, as their Reason, had it not been so fatally depraved, could have produced. For if their Conscience, that faithful Monitor, did perchance apprize them of their wretched State, yet their sensual Passions, those loud and boisterous Enemies, struck Conscience dumb, and would not suffer this heavenly Conductress to speak her Sentiments.

This then being the deplorable State, into which the Sinners of the old World had, by a fatal Abuse of Reason, plunged themselves, there was no Possibility, humanly speaking, for Men thus sunk in Sensuality, to emerge out of it. And therefore God, who is loath that the greatest of Sinners should be utterly lost, even though their Perdition be entirely owing to their own obstinate Folly, was pleased, by the Preaching of *Enos* and his venerable Successors, to remonstrate with those hardened, perverse Men; to acquaint them with his Abhorrence of their foul Transgressions, and of their base Folly and Ingratitude for wilfully defacing that divine Image in which they were made; to exhort them to appease the Wrath of Heaven by sincere Repentance and Amendment of Life; and to chalk out to them, in bolder Characters, the Paths that they ought to walk in for the future, *viz.* by reviving those divine Mandates, which had been so long shamefully laid aside, by that abandoned profane People: And lastly, to forewarn the House of *Cain* of those terrible Judgments which were gathering around them, unless they would relinquish in Time their horrid Impieties. And even when all this would not awaken those secure Sinners from their fatal Slumber, God was pleased, in much Mercy, still to repeat his loving Applications, and to try whether he could not rouse them from the Bed of Sin, by alarm-
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ing their Bears yet more and more. For those future Judgments, which all the other Prophets of the old World down to *Noah*, spoke of only in general Terms, are now revealed to the eighth Preacher of Righteousness, in the most precise and open Manner, viz. that if those Delinquents did not, within a hundred and twenty Years, (a long and most merciful Warning) repent, the Wrath of God would then fall upon them. *Noah* was now to forewarn the Men of the old World of that very exact Time fixed for Vengeance, which his venerable Predecessors only spoke of in general Terms. And next to apprizing those secure Sinners of the Period fixed, *Noah* was likewise enabled to tell them what the fearful Punishment would be, as well as when it would be inflicted. This Punishment was of such an alarming Nature, that, for the Men of that Age not to think it worth while to escape it, shews them to have been lost to all Sense of Fear, and affords us a sad Instance of the dreadful Effect which habitual Profaneness has upon the Mind of Man. But yet, for all this incorrigible Obstinacy of the *Antediluvians*, God did not wholly give them over: For when he commanded his Servant *Noah* to build him a Vessel, in which to secure his Family from the approaching Deluge, God seems to have done this, that those secure Sinners, when they saw the Ark so many Years in preparing, might be the
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more sensibly convinced both of the Sincerity of *Noah*, when he foretold them of the approaching Deluge, and to have (when they beheld the Ark) a daily Monitor before them of their approaching Fate, in Case they did not repent before the Expiration of that merciful Period of God's Grace and Long-suffering. But, notwithstanding all these repeated Calls to Repentance, the Men of the old World were still perversely deaf; and so dreadful is the natural Effect of a long Course of Impiety, that it made those confirmed Delinquents lay aside the primary Laws of Nature.

They had even lost all Sense of Self-Preservation; neither was this the Error of a Month, or a Year; but this fatal Oversight was aggravated by a thousand Repetitions. And though it was undoubtedly the gracious Design of Providence, by that long and slow *Apparatus* of Building the Ark, to give the Sinners of the old World Time to think, reason, and reflect, that this earnest Solemnity of *Noah*, in labouring for near a Century with unwearied Pains, could not possibly be owing to his own foreboding and overheated Imagination, but must have its Foundation in some certain and infallible Revelation, given to *Noah* of the World's Destruction by Water. Neither can it be supposed, that a Person of this Patriarch's eminent Character, a Man, who was honourably distinguished among the

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Antediluvians, (even from his Birth,) as one that was to be a great Benefactor and Comforter of his Brethren, for it is thus recorded of *Noah*, Gen. V. 29. *This same shall comfort us concerning our Work and Toil of our Hands*: It cannot, I say, be at all imagined that such a Person would, of his own Accord, undertake the tedious, and, humanly speaking, unsurmountable Task of Building such an immense Vessel, unless he had been commanded to do it by divine Authority, as well as assured by infallible Truth, that he had no other Means of escaping the Fury of the Deluge, than by that Precaution.

And it may be further observed on this Head, that had *Noah* been naturally possessed with that Spirit of Vanity, in pretending to know and foretel future Events; yet it is what, in the Case before us, he durst not have attempted, because he was too well acquainted with the savage Tempers of his fierce Opposers, to expose himself to their Fury and Resentment. *Noah* (according to the common Term of Man's Life in that Age) was sure to be living at the Time in which he foretold the Deluge would happen; and therefore, in Case it did not happen accordingly, his Life, he well knew, must pay the certain Forfeit of his false Predictions. And though over-heated Bigots, and mad Enthusiasts, possessed with an imaginary Spirit of foretelling future Contingencies, both deceive others, and are deceived

ceived themselves; yet these false Prophets have so much Regard to their own Safety and Reputation, that they generally fix the Completion of their Predictions to such a distant Period, as they are sure the Cheat cannot be detected while they themselves are living. But this was not the Case with *Noah*; he had too much Integrity to attempt to deceive, and too much Penetration not to foresee that certain Ruin, which such a wicked Attempt must unavoidably draw upon him. The great Event, which he foretold, was what he knew must happen in his own Time, even when yet at a hundred Years Distance: But, behold! as the fearful Tragedy was going to be opened, he was then forewarned of it by that solemn Notice, *Gen. VII. 4. Yet seven Days, and I will cause it to rain upon the Earth, forty Days and forty Nights, and every living Substance that I have made, will I destroy from off the Face of the Earth.* But whether *Noah* communicated this Revelation to any besides his own Family, is not certain; I am the rather inclined to think he did not, because he was, in all human Probability, busily employed, during that seven Days Notice, in ranging the various Kinds of Creatures in the Ark into proper Classes; and in so distributing Matters, as not to be unprepared at that dreadful Period, when the Fountains of the great Deep were to be poured out upon a guilty, affrighted World. Or, should it be granted, as some have

have thought, that the whole Species of all manner of living Creatures came spontaneously, or by a Miracle, into the Ark, as once they did to receive their Names from *Adam*, and that therefore *Noah* was at Liberty, during the seven Day's Eve of the Deluge, to spread abroad the sad Alarm, and to apprize a guilty World once more of its immediate Fate: yet it is not at all unlikely, but those hardened Delinquents of the old World would have scoffed both at *Noah*, and his Preaching, as they had all along done before: Or at the most, this merciful Warning could not have produced any other Repentance amongst those dissolute Men, but that ridiculous counterfeit Remorse which arises from Fear of Punishment only, rather than being the free, deliberate Result of a new Heart.

God had already tried every possible Method to reclaim the old World, but to no Purpose; and therefore the Deluge became at last a necessary Judgment, which was the Thing I undertook to prove. And upon this Account the Justice of the divine Being stands quite unimpeached of any Rigour or Severity in that necessary Punishment, as will abundantly appear, if we consider in the next Place, that those hardened Sinners of the old World ceased, after such a long Series of merciful Warnings often given, and as often slighted, to be Objects of God's Mercy any longer. Neither, in the very Nature of Things, could those

those Men ever have been reclaimed by temporary Punishments, any more than by those milder Methods of Conviction, by serious Remonstrances, loving Entreaties, and a thousand repeated Calls to think, consider, and amend. For since it is evident, that all these gracious Methods of Conviction had been ineffectually tried, and upon the same individual Persons, for near a thousand Years, it can never be supposed, without depriving them of free Agency, and using supernatural Compulsion, but that these Methods of Conviction would still have been ineffectual, had God vouchsafed to repeat them ten thousand Years longer. For if Men, for near the Space of a thousand Years, are not to be reclaimed, it is morally impossible to bring about their Conversion in any finite or limited Time. And the longer Men, with a malicious Perverseness, continue in known Sins, the more difficult is their Conversion always found. And the following Remark of the Prophet seems to be founded in the very Nature of habitual Guilt, *Sooner may the Ethiopian change his Skin, and the Leopard his Spots, than a hardened Veteran in Sin can be reclaimed from the Error of his Ways.* So that the Inhabitants of the old World even forced the Almighty, in Vindication of his Justice, to cut them utterly off from the Face of the Earth. They had, by such long repeated Abominations, reduced Heaven to this unavoidable Dilemma, either

of contending with them by Threatnings and Punishments, even to Eternity, had he continued them upon Earth; or else destroying them utterly out of this World, and shifting the Scene of those Torments to the Land of eternal Horror. For what is Providence to do, when Men are wilfully deaf to all the possible Expedients of Reformation? God must either exert his Justice and Equity; or else suffer his Mercy to be slighted and abused to the End of Time.

The first of these he seldom or never does but when all other Methods are rendered ineffectual; in which Case, God is obliged, in Vindication of his own unchangeable Nature, and his righteous Laws, to hold out the Scale of Justice. And was God's Mercy in a strict metaphysical Sense, to be so infinitely extended as to forgive all Manner of deliberate Sins, and the most malicious Wickedness, it would, in my most serious Opinion, be opening a Door to all Manner of shocking and presumptuous Impiety. Unlimited Mercy would then undoubtedly tempt base, dissingenuous Minds to Sin, in fond Hopes that Grace and Mercy would more and more abound. And it would be making that darling Attribute of the Almighty, not a Perfection, but a mere necessitated Piece of weak and dangerous Compassion.

But this Notion of divine Mercy seems by no Means reconcilable to this Illustration of the

the darling Attribute, *viz.* *There is Mercy with thee, therefore shalt thou be feared.* God can undoubtedly confine his Mercy as well as his Justice; and as no other Being can pardon and save the Sinner but God only, God only is to be feared. For as Mercy is solely in the Disposal of the divine Being; so upon that Account, his Creatures ought to be very fearful of offending him, in whose Power alone it is to pardon offending Man. And to maintain that God's Mercy is such, that he cannot but admit the most notorious Sinners to Pardon, (even though they leave the World without the least Signs of Sorrow and Remorse for their Crimes) is making God himself an imperfect Being; because it is depriving the Almighty of his very Essence and highest Perfection, his *Free Agency*.

But this Notion of God's Mercy is very unworthy of an all-wise and righteous Being, as well as greatly dangerous, in its *Consequence*, to the Honour of God's Laws, and the eternal Interest of all accountable Creatures, as will be shewn in the Course of this Work.

God's Mercy to Sinners is undoubtedly what, in the lax common Manner of speaking, may be called infinitely great; and as it is directly contrary to his gracious Intentions, that so much as one single Soul should eternally perish, so he tries every possible Method but that of Compulsion, to convert all his Creatures from the Error of their Ways. And,

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notwithstanding God is provoked every Day, his Arms of Mercy are still open to receive the greatest Sinners that will but return unto their *heavenly Father* with *unfeigned Repentance* and *Contrition of Soul*. For though God's Mercy is infinite in Degree to every Man, (not in Duration;) yet infinitely great as it is, it is certainly conditional, and requires some proper Quality in every Man, before he can be a fit Object of this divine Favour. And to assert the contrary, and maintain that God's Mercy can never be so far abused by any of his Creatures, as to render them unworthy of the Continuance of it, is in Effect the same as to say, that Virtue and Vice, Good and Evil, are all one in the Sight of the divine Being; But if this be the Case, *how shall God judge the World?* or what will become of divine Justice, the very Essence whereof is *Ius suum cuique tribuere*, to render unto every Man according to his Deserts? If divine Mercy be unconditional, then may Men with Boldness go on in the most notorious and daring Profaneness: They may curse and blaspheme God to his Face, trample all Laws, human and divine, under Foot, make a Mock at Sin, laugh at Murder and Adultery, scoff at eternal Punishments, and defy God's Vengeance with Impunity.

But let us not be deceived with these Wiles of the Devil, for God's Mercy is not thus to be mocked; and infinitely great as it is, yet it

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may be provoked by hardened and repeated Insults and Abuses. And surely it is an Act of the greatest Mercy and Condescension in the divine Being, that he is ready to pardon the very greatest of Sinners, that come to him with Faith, Humility, and Repentance.

Is it not enough for God to be reconciled to the most abandoned and notorious Offenders, upon Condition that these Men will relinquish their Crimes, and sue for Pardon and Forgiveness in due Time? But if these Men are determined to pursue the bewitching Paths of Vice, till Death, old Age or Infirmities overtake them; if they think to sin upon Principle, and fondly imagine to obtain Mercy in a future State, notwithstanding they live in wilful Crimes till the pale Tyrant *Death* draws back the Curtain, and even then think it needless to sue for God's Pardon; if Men will let the grand Deceiver, and their own treacherous Hearts thus wheedle them into eternal Ruin, eternal Ruin they will find, when too late, will be their unavoidable Doom. For when Men are once so far lost, even to common Sense, as to imagine God's Mercy too great to be abused, and his Long-suffering too extensive ever to be tired out, he is then obliged to draw the Sword of Justice, even in spite of his Mercy and Long-suffering.

This was the true State of the Case between God and the Sinners of the old World: His Mercy they shamefully abused, and his compassionate

passionate Forbearance, of near a thousand Years Continuance, only hardened and confirmed those ungrateful Delinquents more and more in Sins of deliberate Presumption. What then at last was to be done? God had tried every Method to reclaim that wicked Race of Men, but to no one Purpose; what therefore could yet be done to this *first Vineyard*, or original Church of God, that he had not already done in it?

Was God still to bear with that incorrigible People a thousand Years longer, and suffer them, all the while, to work all manner of presumptuous Wickedness, and to set his Mercy at utter Defiance? For that the Sinners of the old World would not have been reclaimed, but hardened by that Addition of a thousand Years farther Probation, is but too evident from their Conduct, during that Period of a hundred and twenty Years, which God allowed them as a merciful Space for Repentance and Amendment. This Period of Grace only gave them an Opportunity of making more horrid Strides in Profaneness; neither can it be supposed, that those Men, who, during the long Track of a thousand Years, could not be reclaimed, or made sensible of their Sin and Danger, would have been converted from their Abominations in any Length of Time, though *ten thousand Times ten Millions of Years*.

The Man that won't be convinced of the Folly, Danger, and Baseness of an abandoned

Course of Life, by the Dictates of Reason and repeated Revelations of near a thousand Years Continuance, (or even fifty Years) such a Man's Conversion is not to be the Work of a finite Duration of Time. And there does not seem, in the very Nature of Things, any other Method of treating such confirmed Sinners, than that which infinite Wisdom saw was become necessary, viz. by destroying that whole Race of Sinners by the Waters of a Flood. But God did not proceed to this necessary Vengeance, till he had given to all future Ages, a full Proof, that when all the gentle Methods of Love and Forbearance are to no other Purpose than to harden Men in Sin, the Sword of divine Justice is then absolutely necessary.

This has ever been God's gracious and wise Proceedings with Mankind: he did not lift up the Sword of Vengeance in the old World, till the peaceable Flag of Mercy was utterly defied. He suffered his Justice to give Way to his Mercy, till both began to be ridiculed; and then sure it was high Time for God to vindicate himself and his righteous Laws. So that my last general Head is firmly established, viz. That the Justice of God, in the Destruction of the old World, cannot be impeached of Rigour or Cruelty, because it was absolutely necessary. And, as from the foregoing History of the first Ages of the World, we see that God's Mercy, great and adorable as it is, has been turned into Wrath; therefore should it

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ever be the fatal Mistake of this, or any other Nation, to be guilty of the like Abuse of God's Mercy, even when we have so many Ensamples written for our Admonition, what else can be expected but approaching Desolation and unavoidable Misery ?

SECTION I.

The End of the First Book.

B O O K II.

SECTION I.



THE Reader has seen, from the first Part of this Work, that the old World was Proof against a thousand repeated Efforts of divine Love, as well as the greatest finite Punishments; and I doubt not but it strikes every tender Bosom with Sorrow and Astonishment, to behold those Vices which had ruin'd one World already, so soon breaking out again after the Flood, and with greater Fury than before. For that neither God's Long-suffering, nor his Vengeance, though both alternately tried a thousand Times over, gave any sort of Check to some kind of Men, is a melancholy Truth, which the more we are conversant in antient History, whether Sacred or Profane, the more readily we shall admit. And a stronger Proof of the Inefficacy of all temporary Punishments to deter some kind of Men from daring Impiety, cannot be produced, than what the next ridiculous Enterprize of Mankind after the Deluge affords us, as described in the following Words; *And they*

they said, Go to, let us build us a City and a Tower, whose Top may reach unto Heaven; and let us make us a Name, lest (or before) we be scattered abroad upon the Face of the whole Earth. And in order to set this Babel Story in its true Light, let us in the first Place inquire a little into the History and Characters of the principal Men concerned in this vainglorious Undertaking; and when this is done, I will then point out the Sin and Folly of the Undertaking itself.

My first Business then is to inquire a little into the History and Characters of some of the principal Men concern'd in this vainglorious Attempt. — Now it seems very certain that, amongst many other desperate Associates in that ambitious and daring Enterprize at Babel, *Ham* with his two impious Sons, *Canaan* and *Cush*, were the principal Promoters. For by what appears of these Mens Complexions, they were capable of engaging in the most profane and execrable Attempt. *Ham's* Conduct, with Regard to the piteous Infirmities of his aged Father, *Noah*, shews him to have been a Monster of brutal undutifulness, and his being saved in the Ark, is a most marvellous Instance of God's great Love for all that belonged to his faithful Servant, *Noah*; and is withal a Confirmation of that Remark, that though there were in the Ark no more than eight Persons, yet one, for his Impiety, was a Devil, and suffered for that Time to escape, so

willing is God to try the greatest Sinners by all possible Forbearance. And as to *Canaan*, his Character was certainly very dark, otherwise *Noah* would never (as he did, *Gen. IX. 25.*) have thus pronounced Sentence upon him, *Curst be Canaan, a Servant of Servants shall be unto his Brethren.* For though it is not quite certain whether *Canaan* was accessory to his Father *Ham's* Crime, in exposing the Nakedness of his aged mistaken Parent, yet his own Guilt no doubt was such as justified the Curse denounced against him. And as it is observed by some one that *Canaan* was not only, *Genere Cham filius, (ut Reliqui filii erant) sed moribus;* the Son of *Ham* by natural Descent, (as the rest of *Ham's* Children also were) but that he imitated his dissolute Father in all his abandoned Impieties, so this helps us to the Reason, as well as Vindication of God's Proceedings in the Sentence pronounced upon *Canaan* in particular, and not upon all the Sons of *Ham*; for in this Case *Noah's* Curse was a prophetic Malediction of the *Canaanites*, and the tragical History of that idolatrous Nation shews, that the Malediction of an injured, provoked Parent does not pass for Nought. And this Curse denounced upon *Canaan*, and not in express Terms upon *Ham*, the principal Delinquent, is an Intimation to that undutiful Scoffer at his Father's Infirmities, that his irreverent Treatment in exposing the Nakedness of *Noah*, should be retaliated upon himself by

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the undutiful Conduct of his own dissolute Children; and affords a Lesson of Instruction to *Ham*, and to all the World, that the Sin of deriding and exposing the Infirmities of an aged Parent, is of too flagrant a Nature to be, (according to God's Rule in the Jewish Oeconomy) quite overlooked, even in *the third or fourth generation*: For that the Descendants of *Canaan* were, what on Account of their own dissolute Lives, the atrocious Crime of *Ham*, and the prophetic Curse of *Noah*, the most miserable Race of Men the Sun ever beheld, let their tragical History, and final Destruction by the Children of *Israel*, (Descendants of *Shem* in the Line of *Heber*) avouch. The next daring Associate in the Building, or, as the great *Bochart* is of Opinion, in rebuilding the Tower of Babel, was * *Nimrod*. For that he was actually

* *Nimrod etiam non videtur ex illorum fuisse numero qui turrim extruxerunt, (that is, the first Tower) si ut puer fuit aut nondum natus. And the Reasons which this Miracle of human Learning gives for his Opinion, are as follow: Alioqui cladem communem non evasisset, atque illi cum ceteris fuisset alio migrandum; nec diceretur, Gen. x. 10. Principium regni ejus fuisse Babylon, quā nondum extructā, conditores vi δειλάτω dissipati sunt. Puto igitur post illam cladem terram Sinbar aliquot annis jacuisse desolatam recenti memoriā tantæ dissipationis omnes homines absterrente ab illa invadendā. Donec Nimrod homo per-vicax, esse conferre ausus est, cum magnā Chusæorum manu, ut opus dudum interruptum continuaret, & perducet ad umbilicum: Atque eum ipsum locum in quo disiectum fuerat humanum genus, & undique dispersum, voluit (Scil. Nimrod) esse Regni sui Sacrarium & Metropolim. Vid. Bocharti Phaleg. Cap. 10.*

actually the principal Promoter of the Babel Structure, and gave the finishing Stroke to that impious Enterprize, is evident from his Character in the following short, but very expressive Lines; *And Cush begat Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one in the Earth: he was a mighty Hunter before the Lord. Wherefore it is, (or will be said in after Ages) Even as Nimrod the mighty Hunter before the Lord.* And the Beginning of his Kingdom was Babel, &c. in the Land of *Shinar*. In this Picture of *Nimrod*, though but in Miniature, we may discover the first most finished Tyrant. *Nimrod's* Ambition knew no Bounds: He was not content with exercising an unlimited Tyranny over the Bodies of his Equals, but made every impious and bold Attempt to corrupt, eclipse, and enslave the Minds of his Fellow-Creatures. *Nimrod* was, by the Prince of Subtilty, let into that devilish Secret, that the only Steps, by which he was to mount up to the Top of Arbitrary Dominion, were by depraving Mens Minds, blinding their Understandings, and keeping them in habitual Stupidity. This I take to be the original Plan upon which all tyrannical Governments in after Ages were founded. This however was the very Plan upon which this first Tyrant proceeded. Divine Right *Nimrod* could not plead, because it is evident God did not approve, but condemned his impious Attempt, by leaving it upon Record, that *Nimrod's* Tyranny and Ambition would in after Ages become A

Proverb

Proverb of Repraach. Neither had *Nimrod* any natural Rights, either of Primogeniture, Affinity, or Succession, to the Imperial Diadem, because there had never been any such Thing before. But however, *Nimrod*, in Spite of all * Restraints from God, or Nature, was resolv'd at all Events, to make himself, not a King, but a most oppressive Tyrant, over his free-born Brethren: Nay, and even over his venerable Ancestors, *Noah* and his Sons, who were all living when *Nimrod* impiously assum'd a tyrannical Authority over his Fellow-Creatures. For that *Nimrod* was a Tyrant in the State, is deducible from these Words, *he began to be a mighty One in the Earth*: and that *Nimrod* did not stop here, but daringly went on to oppose and subvert the Worship of the true God in the Line of *Shem*, is manifest from the other Features in his Portraiture, viz. *He was a mighty Hunter before the Lord*: for it seems clear from this Part of *Nimrod*'s Character, that he was for putting on the † *Mitre* as well as the *Crown*; and, like some of his worthy Successors, was not afraid to oppose, and *exalt himself above all that is called God*, or is worshiped; so that he *as God*, was for sitting in his new erected Temple at *Babel*, and for *shewing himself*

* Omnia polluit, miscuit sacra profanis ut imperaret.

† Voluit quoque regnare in Religione, erexit novos cultus coram, Domino; usurpavit sacerdotium vi & ferro, persecutor Prophetarum & Sanctorum (i. e.) Populi Dei in linea ex qua Christus oriturus. Vid. Syn. Crit. in cap. dec. Gen.

himself that he was God. This impious Arrogancy of *Nimrod* is confirmed by the almost universal Consent of all Antiquity: *Nimrod* is, on all Hands allowed to have been the * Author of Idol Worship; and as he had divine Honours paid him under the Title of *Belus* and *Baal* after his Death, it is more than a little probable, that he paved the Way to this blasphemous diabolical Practice during his own Life.

This then being the Conduct of *Nimrod*, the Tyrant of Babel, it presents my Reader with another sad Instance that some Tempers are not to be reclaimed from the greatest Enormities by any sort of temporal Expedients; for the Destruction of the old World by Water was, in the Time that this first Tyrant and Idolater lived, too recent to be forgotten: The ragged Rocks, and the shattered Mountains, were all very legible Monuments of that hideous Ruin, which invincible Profaneness had so lately brought upon a miserable infatuated World. My Reason for being at all inquisitive about the Men that were the principal Promoters in erecting the Tower of Babel is this, that when the very Persons themselves are known who were the chief Promoters of the Babel Enterprize, we shall from hence more plainly see the Folly and Crime of the Enterprize itself: for in the first Place, *Nimrod*, the bold Reviver and Finisher of that impious Work, was born not above

forty

* —primum Regem et Condito rem Babel, & primum Aucto rem Idololatriæ. *Tirin.*

forty Years after the Flood, and consequently must arrive to that Maturity of Discernment, as to be well able to discover the Havock of the Deluge; for the shattered deformed Globe, could by no means have repaired its Ruins in so short a Space of Time, before *Nimrod* was able to see and judge for himself. And supposing he was perversely deaf to that Account of the Flood, which *Noah*, without all Peradventure, often related to his headstrong, wicked Progeny, still Matters of Fact could not be denied, and *Nimrod* must disown his Senses, not to perceive the dismal Remains, and hideous Ruins of the Deluge, which in his Time, could not escape the Notice of the most incurious Beholder. And as to *Canaan*, he was born long before the Waters of the Flood were all run off the Earth, and once more gathered together into their great original * *Synagogue*, or Receptacle, the mighty Ocean. Neither is it improbable, but that many human Skeletons were found almost entire, long after *Canaan* came to the Use of his Reason; and as his Grandfather *Noah* was ever ready and willing to acquaint his younger Children with the melancholy Causes of the Flood, so he would most certainly warn them against those shocking Impieties which he had seen in the old World; and endeavour by his unwearied Admonitions, to prevent the like Crimes from breaking out again in the New. Therefore for *Canaan* not to

* *ὡς συναγωγή μίαν.* See the Greek version of *Gen. I. 9.*

give ear to the pious Lectures of his venerable Grandfire, is even a Demonstration, that there are some Minds of such an obstinate Turn of wilful Impiety, as not to be restrained from Wickedness by any finite Expedients, whether human, or divine. But if *Nimrod* and *Canaan*, with the rest of their Cotemporaries, were Monsters of Infidelity, for not making a more discreet Use of the great and awful Truths, which the Deluge, in all its History, as related by righteous *Noah*, and as seen in its Ruins with their own Eyes, conveyed to them; if these Men were lost to all Sense of Feeling and Conviction, what must be the Guilt and daring Impiety of *Ham*? This Man seems to have made a League with Sin and Hell, and in his Heart to scoff and condemn the Great Majesty of Heaven, as in his Deeds he had done at his venerable Father. For *Ham* could have no Plea, nor the least Shadow of Excuse for running into that very Profaneness which he knew had destroyed one World already, and which astonishing Desolation he had himself been an Eye-witness of. *Ham* had, in the Language of the Psalmist, *been at the Sea in a Ship*, and a Ship of divine Contrivance; he had seen the *Works of the Lord, and his Wonders in the Deep*, in full display of majestic Horror. *Ham* had, almost in the very Letter, *been mounted up to the Heavens, and gone down again to the Deep*; his Soul had melted away, and he had, no doubt often cried unto the Lord in his Trouble, and

God

God had graciously brought this Unbeliever out of his Distress. And surely the least that *Ham* could have done was, till the Day of his Death, to have *praised the Lord for his Goodness, and to declare the Wonders that he had done* for himself, in the Preservation of his Life from the Rage of cruel Waters. But for *Ham*, instead of this, to run into the most outrageous Impieties; to scoff at the Indiscretion of an infirm Parent, and, through *malicious* Wickedness, to expose his naked Sire to public View, in order to have a Handle for his own Irregularities, and that he might, by this means, lessen the Influence of all his future Counsels; for a Man, I say, first to be guilty of these Crimes against his aged Father, and then to associate with other profane Wretches, in order to shake off all Ties of Religion, and to erect a Government in Opposition to Heaven, presents us with such a black Picture of invincible Profaneness, as exceeds every Thing of the Kind that History, either Sacred or Profane, can afford us.

Having given you a little Sketch of the Characters of the principal Promoters of the Enterprize at *Babel*, I will now inquire a little into the Sin and Folly of that rash Undertaking. But before the Sin and Folly of that *Babel* Affair will clearly appear, it will be proper to inquire what were the Ends to be answered in erecting that lofty Tower. One commonly received Opinion concerning the Tower of *Babel*,

Babel, is this, that it was built as an Asylum, or Place of Refuge to flee to, in Case of another impending Deluge. But this is an Opinion that has no Foundation either in the sacred History, or in the Reason of Things: *Moses*, in the Account of the *Babel* Enterprize, says not one Word that favours this Opinion. And so very few People, in Case of another Deluge, could be secured in the higher Parts of this Tower, from the Violence of the Waters; that, blind and stupid as those Men concerned in the Affair were, the very Nature of Things must convince them of the Folly, and even Impossibility of taking Shelter in the Tower of *Babel*, in Case of another general Flood. For as Men multiplied in the World, they would stand in need of a larger Building to flee to for Safety: Every Village therefore must have its Asylum erected, and Men could not possibly find Time for any other useful Employments: All the necessary Callings of Life, such as Planting, Sowing, Breeding of Cattle, and Feeding of Sheep, must have been wholly laid aside; and all the World must then in Reality have been vain Projectors, and Builders of still more and more *Babels*. And besides this Method being ridiculous, the very End proposed from these lofty Buildings, supposing it possible to have erected as many as would have contained the whole Race of Men, was impossible. For what Folly would it have been to think of escaping another universal Flood in

a Building of Man's Device? How could Men imagine the Tower of *Babel*, had it been ten thousand Times stronger, could have resisted the Violence of those mighty Waters, which tore out the very Entrails of the Earth, rent the stubborn Rocks to pieces, and tossed up the *everlasting Hills* like so many floating Bubbles? And what still renders this Opinion more improbable is, that solemn Covenant which God established between Him, and *Noah*, and every living Creature, that He would *no more destroy the World by the Waters of a Flood*. And if it should be said, that the Posterity of wicked *Ham* might not believe, or trust in this sacred Covenant, yet whether they believed it or no, still the Safety proposed from the Tower of *Babel*, in Case of any future Danger by Water, was impracticable. But I am inclined to think the Posterity of *Ham* (notwithstanding their monstrous Infidelity in other Matters) believed the Truth of God's Promise not to destroy the World any more by the Waters of a Flood. And the Offspring of wicked *Ham* leaving the high Mountains, and descending to the low Plain of *Shinar*, is to me a full Testimony, that they were not in fear of being any more cut off by a Deluge. As therefore the Tower of *Babel* could not be built with any Design of providing for a Thing in its own Nature impossible, it may be reasonably supposed, that the main End and Design of that proud Structure, was to perpetuate the Name of *Ham's*

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impious

impious Posterity. They could not but foresee the Necessity they would in Time be under, of dispersing themselves abroad into far distant Parts of the Earth: And as the most infamous Men are not without a kind of inbred Fondness to live in the Mouths of Posterity, so the Descendants of *Ham*, having no virtuous Atchievements, nor any truly heroic Actions to recommend them to the Esteem of future Ages, they betook to that mock and ridiculous Method * of making a lifeless and monstrous Heap of Stones rear up themselves, to acquaint Posterity that their worthless Builders had nothing else fit to be recorded in the Annals of Fame. This seems to have been the principal Motive in the Building of Babel: This huge Monster, like the Pyramids of the Egyptian Tyrants, was the heavy Offspring of Earth-born Pride, and low misplaced Ambition.

* I know some Rabbinical Expounders give a different Account of the Babel Structure; and assert, that those Words, *Gen. XI. 4. Let us make us a Name*, are to be render'd *Nomen faciamus*: And in support of this Opinion, they tell us, the Original, which the Seventy Interpreters translate *ἵσμεν*, and which the English Version renders *Name*, *i. e.* Renown; signifies more properly the sacred ineffable NAME: But with what Propriety the tremendous Title of *JEHOVAH*, can be applied to a dumb Idol, let the sober Reader judge: And yet in support of this Construction, it is alledged, that the Tower of Babel was an idolatrous Temple, sacred to *Belus*. But the great *Borhart* makes *Belus* the same with *Nimrod*, who was scarce born when the first Babel-Structure was erected, neither had he divine Honours paid him till after his Death. See *BOCH. Phaleg. Lib. I.*

tion. And as *Nimrod* was the great Chieftain in this vainglorious Undertaking, and the Tower of Babel is generally allowed to have been *Nimrodo Arx Tyrannidis & Impietatis*; "The proud Citadel of *Nimrod's* Tyranny and Profaneness;" let that vainglorious Structure be eternally distinguished by the Title of *Nimrod's* impious Folly: For, that the Enterprize was in itself very ridiculous, enough has been said; and that it was an impious Undertaking, appears from the Design of building this proud Structure. For had it been erected to perpetuate any truly great or memorable Event, as a laudable Spur for future Ages to copy the great Example; had it been done to have promoted any pious or useful Purpose, to help the astronomick Eye, or to direct the Mariner's Course, then the Undertaking would have been justified by the Usefulness of the Design: But as it is evident the Descendants of wicked *Ham* had no such laudable Views in the Babel Affair, but thought by that pompous * Structure to gain themselves a mighty Name

* If the Reader has a Fancy to be more particularly informed concerning the Dimensions of the Tower of Babel, let him consult BOCHART's *Phaleg*. Book I. cap. 13. and HERODOTUS his Description of the Temple of *Belus*; a Title given to *Nimrod* by profane Writers. I will, however, for the sake of such Persons as may not have these Books by them, cite a Passage from each. Concerning the Tower of Babel. HERODOTUS gives us this Account, where, speaking of the Temple of *Belus*, he says, *Ἰς μέσῳ δὲ τοῦ ἱεροῦ πύργῳ ἱερὸς ἀνακτομένης, σάδιον καὶ τὸ μῆκος καὶ τὸ ἵψος, καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦτω τῷ πύργῳ ἀνα-*

Name amongst all future Generations, as they built it by way of Insult to the House of *Shem* in the Line of *Heber*, as well as in Defiance of Heaven, it was high Time for God, whose Name and Worship the profane Offspring of *Ham* held in utter Contempt, once again to hold out the Rod of his Displeasure, and to let those vainglorious and daring Opposers of true Religion know, that there still was a God that governed the World, and ruled

λΟ-πύρσΟ-ιν-βίβλιν, η̄ ἱερΟ-μύλα ινι τούτῳ, μέχρι τοῦ ἱερΟ-πύργου. According to this Account, the Tower of Babel was above eight times higher than the highest of the Egyptian Pyramids; for we are told, that the biggest is only five hundred and twenty Feet high, upon a Base of six hundred and two Feet square: Whereas the Tower of Babel, if *Iup*Ο-, (according to the common Construction of this Passage) be rendered *altitudo*, and upon the Supposition generally made, that all the eight Towers were of equal Length, was no less than five thousand two hundred and eighty Feet high! *Credat Iudeus Apelles: Non ego.* BOCHART gives us a far more credible Account of the Dimensions of the Babel-Structure; and is for rendering *Iup*Ο-, *per latitudinem*, (the true Import of the Word) and not *per altitudinem*. And it does not appear from what HERODOTUS has said of the Dimensions of Babel, that he ever pretended to know its Altitude; much less would he, I should think, ever dream of making the Babel Tower so infinitely higher than what the most credulous Man upon Earth could possibly believe. And BOCHART observes, that the only Design of HERODOTUS in the Passage now cited, was to shew that this mighty Structure was erected upon a Basis that was a square Furlong. — *hoc solum vult Herodotus, turris basim fuisse quadratam, Et tam in latitudine quam in longitudine, id est, undique stadium paruisse. Sed de altitudine non est quod speris quicquam ex Herodoto posse elici, cum de illa altum filiat.* Vid.

BOCH. Phaleg. cap. 13.

in the Kingdoms of Men. And though the Almighty did not proceed to any violent Methods of Judgment, yet he sufficiently manifested his Displeasure at their impious Design, by confounding their Language; in Consequence whereof, they were forced to desist from an Undertaking as vain and foolish as it was wicked and arrogant.

The foregoing Account of the Building of Babel, and of the principal Men therein concerned, affords us many useful Hints for our own wise Conduct. And while we look back with Abhorrence and Astonishment at the Posterity of *Noah*, for so quickly forgetting what it was that had lately destroyed the old World, shall not we ourselves be equally guilty, if we run into the same daring Impiety? We blame them, and indeed justly, for so soon forgetting the Havock which Sin had wrought in the Earth; then what are we to say to ourselves, if our own Conduct is equally culpable? They knew there had been an universal Destruction by Water, and that unrepented Impiety was the Cause of it; and so do we know it too. And if they saw the Effects and Ruins of the Deluge, so may we in every Part of the present unlevel and shattered Earth, unless we are wilfully Blind. And if the Descendants of *Noah* heard from his own Mouth the tragical History of the Flood, we have that very History conveyed down to us from the Mouth of Him who cannot deceive.

In short, whatever Proofs of the Truth of that interesting Event, the immediate Descendants of *Noah* had, whatever Arguments of Conviction, Dissuasives from committing the like Crimes for the Future, what, and how often soever these Men had Calls to Repentance, we of this very Age have exactly the same, and many others which they had not. So that if for all these additional Advantages which the Christian World enjoys above former Ages, the Christian World should still outstride the Jew and the Pagan in daring Profaneness, will not Christendom have Reason to fear the dreadful Stroke of that divine Vengeance, which has sooner or later been the Fate of all impenitent Nations? And the only Expedient which is left in our Power, (and let us adore the Goodness of God that it is yet in our Power) the only probable and rational Way, by which Christendom may avoid the Sword of Vengeance that has long been brandishing over it, is to stem out, as quick as possible, that rapid Torrent of Profaneness and Immorality, which, like an Inundation, is breaking in upon all Ranks and Degrees amongst us. This universal Infection affords, to the common Enemies of this Land, who are skulking in Ambush to surprize us, golden Hopes, that by our *home* Divisions, our Vices, our Luxuries and Immoralities, we shall soon be render'd unable to make the least Stand against any Adversary that may attack us. This is a melancholy Truth

Truth that all thinking People see and lament, unless those whose private Interest it is to be wilfully Blind. And if we had no human Enemies to fear, yet our own Immoralities would, of themselves, soon work our Ruin. A sinful Land wants nothing to overturn it, but its own * Infatuation. And when the World is once overrun with Profaneness, the Pillars of it cannot but shake. Such as this is the unhappy State of one Part of the Glöbe, and if we mean to escape the impending Ruin, let us neither wholly rely upon ourselves, nor so grossly neglect every human Expedient. For whenever there is Reason to apprehend that Ruin, like a dark Tempest, is gathering around us, the only Safety is from deep Repentance, and turning unto God. For the vain Projectors of Babel might as well have expected to escape the Fury of a second Deluge, in that foolish Work of their own Contrivance, as we can hope to avoid the Storm that seems ready to burst over us, unless we first make Peace with Him that can disperse it: The Way to make Peace with Heaven, is by sincere Repentance; and to shew the Sincerity of our Repentance, will be by forsaking those Sins which make Repentance necessary.

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S E C T.

* *Quos Jupiter vult perdere, prius dementat.* If then National Madness is ever a certain Forerunner of National Calamities, it is much to be feared the sad Catastrophe of Christendom is at no great Distance.

S E C T. II.

AS, upon the Confusion of Tongues, Men were dispersed abroad into various and distant Parts of the Earth, I shall now be obliged to shift the Scene from the Land of *Shinar* to some other Country, and to inquire a little farther into the Conduct of human Nature, after that memorable Check, which divine Justice was obliged to give to that vain and impious Undertaking at Babel. And in this Survey we shall find, that Change of Climate * makes no Change in the Mind of perverse Man. And that we may have an Opportunity of viewing human Nature under greater Variety, I will at present remove the Scene to that Part of the World, where we shall meet with the greatest Crowd of Actors: For which Purpose let *Egypt* be our present Station. But before I carry my Reader to the Banks of the *Nile*, let him be previously advertised amongst what sort of People he is going to be introduced, And that he may not be disappointed in his Expectations of reaping any extraordinary Advantages amongst the *Egyptians*, let him be pleased to consider, that these Men were Descendants of *Ham*, whose black Picture he has so lately beheld. For that *Mizraim*, the Son of *Ham*, was the Progenitor of the *Egyptians*, is confirmed from

* *Cælum, non animum mutant.*

the Name of the Metropolis, which is called by the Arabs to this Day *Meſer*, and the Egyptians call themſelves *Meſorites*, or *Misraimites*; which Appellation, was undoubtedly a Patronimic derived from *Misraim*, who was a Son of wicked *Ham*. But however, *Misraim* being, as the Hebreſians tell us, more properly the Name of a People, than of a Perſon, ſo it is evident from the Appellations in uſe amongſt the Egyptians, that they were a People deſcended from *Ham*. This Point therefore being ſettled, let us ſee whether the Egyptians did not inherit ſome of the Qualities of their wicked Progenitors. As to the general Conduct of the Egyptians, it was, I think, when well examined, by no means ſuch as to merit that exalted Character, which ſome Men, who take Things upon Truſt, have beſtowed upon that idolatrous People. For, I think, abating their kindred Nations, the Canaanites, (Deſcendants of *Ham* in the Line of *Canaan*) there does not ſeem to have been any one Nation ſo much addicted to idolatrous * Fooleries and ſtupid Abominations

* ——— Crocodilon adorat

Pars hæc: illa pavet ſaturam ſerpentibus Ibin.

Illic cæruleos, hic piſcem fluminis, illic

Oppida tota canem venerantur, nemo Dianam

Porrur, & cepe, nefas violare & frangere morſu.

Q ſanctas Genteis, quibus hæc naſcuntur in hortis

Numina! ———

Though it may be ſaid, that the Poet is here ſpeaking of
Egyptians

tions. And so superstitiously was every Corner of the Land of *Egypt* crouded with idol Gods, that there was scarce a single Herb in the Garden, but had its tutelar Abomination standing by it: Nay, it was hardly possible to walk along the Fields, or Streets, without stumbling upon some material, lumpish God. To this great Number of Idols God himself alludes, (*Exod. XII. 12.*) *Against all the Gods of Egypt will I execute Judgment: I am the Lord.* And to this Day there is a Tradition among the Jews, that in that terrible Night, when God smote all the First-born of *Egypt*, the Temples fell down; the Idols of Metal melted away; those of Stone moulder'd into Dust; and their wooden Gods were shiver'd to pieces, as *Dagon*, the God of the Philistines was, when the Ark of the Lord was put into that Idol Temple. And this Tradition has, I think, more Foundation in Reason than many others, whose Credit is seldom disputed. For in that solemn Night, when the First-born of *Egypt* were slain, the Destroying Angel visited every House and Corner of the Land of *Ham*. And it is probable enough, that *whatsoever* had the blasphemous Title of *God* engraven upon it, would fall down into Pieces, at the awful Presence of the divine De-

Egyptians of far later Date, than those whose History we are now upon, yet the foregoing Lines exhibit a very just Picture of the more early Inhabitants of the Land of *H A M*.

Destroyer. God's Majesty and Power were too nearly interested, to suffer a stupid, lifeless Log of Wood, which human Madness and Superstition had named a God, to escape undefaced in that Night of Vengeance. And as the Egyptians were most outrageously superstitious, and, under a sham Pretence of greater Veneration for religious Worship, ran into every gross Abomination; they seem to have had as small a Title to solid and useful Learning, as they had to sound Religion. — For it is well known, these Men did, (and at this Day do the same) affect to foretel future Events, and to divine and prognosticate upon every ridiculous Occasion. They became a Proverb for Soothsaying and Art Magic: What little Knowledge they had in the Heavenly Sciences, served only to render them more ridiculous, by making them set up for Masters in Judicial Astrology, an Art, at the best, as foolish, as it is impious and vile. — And as to what Knowledge this People ever had in Ethics, and Natural Philosophy, it was so very slender, that they were obliged, in order to give it the solemn Appearance of something very profound, to couch it under such hieroglyphical Characters, as scarce any but the Inventers knew. And I am firmly of Opinion, that there is more good Sense, useful Knowledge, and sound Morality, in *Tully's little Book of Offices*, or in one Chapter of the *Wisdom of Solomon*, than in the whole Tribe

Tribe of Egyptian Hieroglyphics. Or, however, if this People had been really as well acquainted with the Works of Creation, and the true Nature and Causes of Things, as is generally supposed, it is very extraordinary that their Love of Fame, and Affectation of immortalizing themselves in many other Respects, did not prevail with them to publish to the World such singular and exalted *Erudition*. But I am well satisfied, that however renowned the Egyptians might be for profound Arts and Sciences in any future Age, yet that King and his Subjects whose Conduct I am now going to consider, do not seem to have been famed for any Thing, but an uncommon Attachment to idolatrous Fooleries, a Contempt of the true God, and an invincible Pride and Hardness of Heart, under the most astonishing Series of divine Judgments that ever were inflicted upon a guilty obdurate World.

The Character of *Pharaoh*, the King of *Egypt*, is emphatically drawn in these Words, (*Exod. VIII. 15.*) *And when Pharaoh saw that there was Respite, he hardened his Heart, and hearkned not unto them.* Is it possible to conceive a blacker Picture of Disingenuity and stubborn Perverseness, than this Conduct of *Pharaoh* presents us with? And that the Egyptians were (at that Time however) a People not to be reclaimed by the greatest temporal Punishments, will appear to any one

one, that attentively considers the History of this stubborn Race of Mortals. But as some forward Readers may be apt to impeach the divine Being, and acquit the Egyptians of all manner of Guilt, on account of their unparallel'd Hardness of Heart, because, say they, God so often declares that he himself would harden *Pharaoh's* Heart, and the Heart of his People; I will inquire whether the Hardness of *Pharaoh's* Heart was really a judicial Punishment, or his own Fault; and then I will shew, that if the Hardness of *Pharaoh's* Heart was a judicial Punishment, still it was no more than what he well deserved; and when these Particulars are cleared up, we shall, I hope, be convinced, that Providence had several great and wise Ends to answer, in those mighty Wonders wrought in *Egypt*, and in the very Presence of *Pharaoh* and all his Court. My first Business then, is to inquire, whether *Pharaoh's* Hardness of Heart was in Reality the Act of Providence, or his own Fault. It is indeed said all along, that God harden'd *Pharaoh's* Heart; but still, Men acquainted with Scripture, and the true Force and Meaning of such Expressions, need not be told, that God is said to *do* a Thing, when he only *permits* it to be done, and leaves his Creatures in the Hands of their own Counsels. This seems to have been the Method of Providence with respect to *Pharaoh*: This haughty Prince had, by a continued Course of idolatrous

idolatrous and wicked Deeds, forfeited the kind Notice of Heaven; nay, he had, in all Probability, not only robbed God of the Worship due to Him alone, but had even suffered this divine Honour to be paid to himself. This was a blasphemous Homage, that most of the Eastern Kings, in after Ages, expected from their ignorant Subjects. And this Prince, of whom I am speaking, would, without one Blush of modest Humility, suffer his Subjects to offer up Incense at his Feet, and, like King *Herod* in after Times, be proudly pleased when his People, in the highest Strain of Blasphemy, shouted out, he was not a Man, but a God. But be this as it will, *Pharaoh* seems to have been gone too far in human Pride, and Self-sufficiency, even to own the supreme Being at all; he was wholly swallowed up in the grossest Idolatry, and had no Idea of any other God, than the false Deities of diabolical and human Invention. *Who is the Lord?* was his Blasphemy to *Moses* and *Aaron*, when they first came before him; and that he fondly and impiously set himself upon a Level, at least, with the mighty God of *Jacob*, let his own Words testify; *I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.* This then being a little Sketch of *Pharaoh's* Character, are we to wonder, if the divine Being left such a one to be guided by his own wicked Heart, and the Suggestions of the common Adversary to God and Men?

Men? And if *Pharaoh* was left wholly to himself, and the Power of seducing Spirits, such a one would be capable of the most outrageous Impiety; and would remain eternally harden'd against all Arguments of Conviction, unless God would vouchsafe to convert him by the greatest Compulsion of supernatural Grace. But this was a Favour that *Pharaoh* could not expect, and which God can never bestow, without breaking through the fixed Rules of his wise Dispensations. — Besides, God is said not only to leave such harden'd and proud Wretches to themselves, but to resist them; whereas if Providence had been quite still with regard to *Pharaoh*, he would have been, of himself, Proof against all the Arguments of Conviction. For if Heaven once left this wicked Prince to himself, if his Heart was untouch'd with divine Grace, neither God's terrible Signs, or fearful Wonders, would produce the least Effect upon the stubborn Mind of *Pharaoh*, any longer than the Rod of Vengeance lay heavy upon him. For the Moment this hard-hearted Wretch had Respite from the Punishment of Sin, he would sin again, and abuse God's Mercies more and more. From whence it is evident, that God needed not to harden *Pharaoh's* Heart in an active Sense, but only to leave that Heart to its own desperate and wicked Counsels. Though it is therefore so often affirmed that God hardened *Pharaoh's* Heart, it may
not

not imply any positive Act, but a negative Judgment of the divine Being, by leaving that idolatrous Prince wholly to the Workings of his own treacherous Bosom. Or even supposing that *Pharaoh's* Hardness of Heart was the *positive Act* of Heaven, and a judicial Punishment, still this was no more than what he well deserved, and what God might with great Justice inflict; which a little nearer Survey of *Pharaoh's* Conduct, and that of his Sorcerers, will sufficiently manifest. For, upon a strict Inquiry, we shall find, that *Pharaoh* was guilty of the grossest Idolatry, and superstitious Attachment to diabolical Magic, and wicked Incantations: By this means he had taken himself out of the kind Protection of Heaven, and put himself under the Power of seducing Spirits. And as these were Crimes directly levell'd against the Majesty of Heaven, need we blame the divine Proceedure, if God, by a just Vengeance, harden'd the Heart and blinded the Understanding of *Pharaoh*, so as to become a Prey to the Subtilty of that infernal Power he had put himself under, and in Consequence thereof, to be made the Dupe of Conjurers and Wizards? For that the Magicians of *Pharaoh's* Court were no other, their Practice, and their pretended Art, sufficiently shew. That these Sorcerers wrought what Wonders they did, not by the Direction and Assistance of Heaven, but by the Help of wicked Spirits, whom

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God, at some Times, permits to work Miracles, is very evident from their own Acknowledgment, in these Words, (*Exod. VIII. 19.*) *Then, the Magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the Finger of God*, which is a full Evidence, that what *they* had done was *not*. And yet notwithstanding this forced Acknowledgment of those Instruments, of Hell, *Pharaoh* still would not believe the Wonders of the true God, nor open his Eyes, so as to see, that what his own Sophisters had done, was by the Powers of Darkness, to cheat and delude him into more certain Ruin. And *Pharaoh* was as culpable in respect of Man, as to his God: For his unprovoked Cruelty to the Israelites, his rigorous Oppression to a People who deserved better Treatment, and the Memory of *Joseph* so soon forgotten, (who, under God, had saved the whole Land of *Egypt* from Destruction by Famine) are so many Records of *Pharaoh's* unprincely Mind, and unparallel'd Cruelty, that no Man need wonder, if Heaven itself became the avowed Enemy of such a Monster of Disingenuity and Ingratitude. It was this cruel Oppression of the Israelites, aggravated by that unheard-of Rigour, in commanding them to deliver the same Tale of *Brick*, without Straw to burn them, as with (a Task in its own Nature impossible) that hastened the Judgment of *Pharaoh*, and of his People. The Cries and Groans of the afflicted Israelites, pierced the

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Ears of Jacob's God, and made the Almighty thus express his Fatherly Compassion, (*Exodus III. 7.*) Surely I have seen the Affliction of my People which are in Egypt, and have heard their Cry, by reason of their Task-masters; for I know their Sorrows. Now let any sober Reader consider this Behaviour of Pharaoh, with relation to his God, and to the distressed Israelites, how much he set the one at Defiance, and cruelly oppressed the other, even before God declared that he would harden Pharaoh's Heart, and then let him ask himself, whether Pharaoh did not well deserve to be punished with judicial Blindness and Hardness of Heart? And farther, let it be observed, that Pharaoh had, by refusing to let the Children of Israel go to sacrifice unto the Lord their God, set the God of the Hebrews at Defiance; and, by so doing, had even declared War against Heaven itself. He had, by his supercilious and haughty Behaviour to the Messengers of the true God, publicly declared, in the Hearing of his Court, that he thought himself, not only equal, but even superior to Jacob's God in Power and Dominion, as these following Words testify: *Who is the Lord, that I should obey his Voice, to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.* So that this was a public Challenge to the God which the Children of Israel worshipped; it was setting up the Gods of Egypt against the God of the Hebrews,

brews, and plainly declaring, that the Idols of *Egypt* were superior to that God, whom the Children of *Israel* wanted to go and sacrifice to in the Wilderness. This then being actually the Case, the Contest was no longer between the Egyptians and the Children of *Israel*, but between *Jacob's* God and the Gods of *Pharaoh*: The Dispute, as *Pharaoh* in the utmost Blasphemy had put it, was between the Worship of the true God and that of dumb Idols. Religion and Idolatry were now at Strife, and no doubt but all *Egypt* was big with Attention to such an interesting Subject, upon the Issue of which, the Dominion of *Pharaoh*, the Reputation of his Wizards, the Credit of Arts Magic, and the Fate of Idolatry, all lay at Stake. This then being the true State of this momentous Affair, and as this proud Prince had sent a blasphemous Challenge of Defiance to *Jacob's* God, by the Ambassadors, *Moses* and *Aaron*, in these Words, *Who is the Lord, or God, which you talk of, that I should obey his Voice, to let Israel go? I know not your God, neither will I let Israel go.* What therefore was the God of *Israel* now to do? Was he to put up this horrid Blasphemy of *Pharaoh*, and to let this atrocious Impiety go unpunished? No; this would have been hardening *Pharaoh's* Heart, and swelling his Pride beyond all Remedy: This would have established Egyptian Idolatry upon Principle, and given

the Priests and Sorcerers of *Pharaoh* a plausible Handle for Triumph. These deluded Tools of seducing Spirits, would then have given full Swing to their wanton and devilish Impostures; their Pride would have known no Bounds, and their inveterate Envy at the Worshippers of *Jacob's* God, would have been satisfied with nothing less, than the Blood of all the forlorn and afflicted *Israelites*. And as *Pharaoh* had publickly set *Jacob's* God at Defiance, *Pharaoh's* blasphemous Pride and horrid Profaneness was to be publicly and astonishingly punished, that all the World might know in after Ages, what it is for mortal Man to dare God's Vengeance, and to imagine that *Omnipotence* will suffer Dust and Ashes to kick against it with Impunity. — The Glory of God, the Honour of his Laws, the Cause of true Religion, and the everlasting Interest of Mankind, were all too nearly concerned; for Heaven not to chastise this Insolence of *Pharaoh* and his Sorcerers in the most public and alarming Manner.

These Matters then being previously considered, the Wisdom, as well as Justice of God, are alike conspicuous in the unconquerable Hardness of *Pharaoh's* Heart; for how otherwise could Heaven have given to all succeeding Ages such a lasting Mark of its Displeasure at human Pride, Idolatry, Superstition, and Sorcery; those devilish Vices, by which ignorant Men are so fatally seduced from their Faith,

Faith, and Allegiance in the God of Heaven? *Pharaoh*, we see, had bid Defiance to *Jacob's* God in the most public manner, and therefore it was meet for God, in the most public manner, to vindicate and assert his own Majesty and Omnipotence. Now this could not have been done by any other Method, than by the Hard-heartedness of that proud Blasphemer, who put the Almighty to this unavoidable Dilemma, either of letting *Pharaoh* publicly triumph over the God of *Israel*, in Consequence whereof, Idolatry, with all her hellish Train of Sorcerers, Soothsayers and Magicians, would have entirely overrun the Eastern World, or else making *Pharaoh*, through Obstinacy, still hold out. For if he had yielded at the first to let *Israel* go, his Sorcerers would not have been discovered to be the Tools of seducing Spirits: And unless God, for wise Reasons, had let *Moses* and *Aaron* have a public Trial with *Pharaoh's* wise Men, the Arts of the Sorcerers would not have been so publicly detected, nor would the Bulk of the Egyptians have had an Opportunity of seeing through, and escaping from, the horrid Evils of such wicked Practices. These Reasons therefore alone, were there no other, are sufficient to acquit the Justice of God in the hardening of *Pharaoh's* Heart. But I must needs own, that it seems to me more agreeable to the Nature

of Things *, as well as more consistent with divine Goodness, to attribute the Hardness of *Pharaoh's* Heart to his own monstrous Rebellion against *Jacob's* God, rather than to ascribe it to the arbitrary Act of the Almighty. For though God has undoubtedly an uncontrollable Sovereignty over all his Creatures, though the Great *Former* hath Power over the Clay, (Human Nature;) of the same Lump to make one Vessel to Honour, and another to Dishonour; yet I cannot think, that any are designedly made unto Dishonour, but such as would not serve for any other Purpose: And the *Vessels of Wrath, fitted to Destruction,* could

* Let the candid Reader here please to take Notice, that by the *Nature of Things*, is not meant, when speaking in a moral Sense, any Relation or Constitution of Things antecedent to, and absolutely independent on the Will of God; but whenever this, or any similar Expressions are made use of in any Part of this Treatise, I would have those Phrases to be understood in no higher a Sense, than as denoting that Difference in the Constitution of Things, which is so very apparent in the present System; for however dormant these Relations of Things might be, before the Almighty spake this System into Being, or how absolutely soever these Relations might depend upon the divine Will, so as to have been constituted after many different Ways, if the Great Creator had thought proper; nevertheless, as these Things are now constituted, there is such a close Relation between one Thing and another, both in the Moral and Natural System, that natural Causes constantly produce natural adequate Effects, unless these Causes are superceded by some extraordinary or miraculous Interposition.

could not be originally formed so by any arbitrary Decree of the supreme Maker. And that memorable Passage, (*Exod. XXXIII. 19.*) from whence the Notion of absolute Predestination was first borrowed, is rather to shew, that God has a just indisputable Right thus to deal with Man, than that he does absolutely reprobate any of his Creatures, independently of some most atrocious Impiety, which God, in his great Fore-knowledge, saw those People would be guilty of, in spite of all the ordinary Methods of Grace and Conviction. And notwithstanding it is recorded, (*Gen. XXV. 23.*) that *Esau*, the elder Brother, should serve the Younger, and that this was the Decree of Heaven, while the Children, (as *St Paul* observes) were yet not born, neither having done Good nor Evil; still, was it not thus decreed, because God, in his wise Fore-knowledge, saw which of the two Brothers, *Jacob* or *Esau*, was the fittest Person, in whom to reestablish, and renew the Promises made to *Abraham* and *Isaac*? For this Preference of the Younger, to *Esau* the elder Brother, before the Children were born, or had, as to human Knowledge, committed either Good or Evil, cannot be deemed as an arbitrary Act, because the different Complexions of *Jacob* and *Esau* were, in respect to God, in present View. Past, Present, and Future, the Method by which finite Beings are obliged to distinguish Time, are but one Tense (the Present)

sent) in the Eyes of God, to whom *Jacob's* and *Esau's* different Characters were as present Objects: *Esau's* profane Contempt of his Birthright was, in respect of Omniscience, a Thing already done: And God's Preference of *Jacob*, though in regard to human Knowledge a kind of Predestination, or rather, a Prediction of a future Event, yet, with respect of the divine Being, it was no more than a Declaration of God's Preference of *Jacob* to *Esau*, in consequence of their different Actions, which in God's Sight were as Things already past. And the same Method of arguing may be applied to *Pharaoh*: The Hardness of his Heart was not any judicial Sentence pronounced antecedent to his Profaneness, but his Profaneness was the Thing that made God denounce this Judgment upon him. *Pharaoh's* Hardness of Heart was, in Strictness of speaking, both his Crime and his Punishment. And since he had so long been deaf to the Dictates of Conscience and Reason, it was, at last, not in his Power, either to see his Crimes, or to repent of them. And this Part of *Pharaoh's* History, I would fain recommend to our own most serious Reflection; for I am much afraid, that in this Account of Egyptian Hardness of Heart, we have but too true a Picture of ourselves. The dreadful Tragedy which this Crime brought upon the Land of *Egypt* is, undoubtedly, like all other divine Vengeance upon incorrigible Sinners, recorded
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for the merciful Admonition of all succeeding Ages; and if we, who know this, still harden our Hearts against it, our Crime will be so much the greater, but what our Condemnation may be, we may tremble to think of.

My next Design in this History of *Pharaoh's Sin*, and the astonishing Scene of Calamities which it brought upon the whole Land of *Egypt*, shall be to point out the great and wise Ends of Providence, in those mighty Signs and Wonders wrought in the Land of *Ham*: And that we might not be left wholly to our own Conjectures in this interesting Subject, God has given us a general Account why he wrought those great Wonders in the Land of *Egypt*, in these Words, (*Exod. IX. 16.*) *And indeed for this Cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my Power, and that my Name may be declared throughout all the Earth.* And, as I have already observed, that *Pharaoh* sent a public Challenge, by *Moses* and *Aaren*, to the God of *Israel*, it behoved infinite Wisdom to chastise that proud Blasphemer in such a public manner, and by such unheard-of Wonders, as could not but sound aloud to every Part of the then habitable World. And Providence, no doubt, did this, that all People and Nations, when they heard of the Wonders *Jacob's God* had wrought in *Egypt*, how He had overthrown the greatest Prince in the World, and purged the Land of *Egypt*

Egypt of Idols, might see the Stupidity and Crime, of worshipping any other Being, but the great God of Heaven and Earth. For as the World in general was, at that Time, deeply sunk into the grossest Errors, and most execrable Impieties, as Men paid divine Honours even to *Demons*, and thought it their Duty to make their own Flesh and Blood pass through the Fire to *Moloch*, so God, who never did, or will leave himself without Witness to any People, by this most exemplary Vengeance upon *Pharaoh*, and his Sorcerers, publickly proclaimed to all Nations, Languages and People, that there was no other God in all the Earth but himself only. This memorable Stroke of divine Vengeance upon the idolatrous Tyrant of *Egypt*, could not but reach to the most distant Parts of the Earth. For as *Egypt* was then the most renowned and powerful Kingdom, and had a Correspondence, and extensive Traffick with all the Eastern Nations, such an alarming Judgment as *Egypt* had felt could not, in the common Course of Things, fail of being noised abroad throughout all the World. And the Crimes which called down these astonishing Plagues upon *Egypt*, were published in every Kingdom, and the History of the Plagues themselves to the Ends of the Earth: By this means, the Power and Sovereignty of *Jacob's* God, were made manifest to all People, and consequently, the great Crime of paying divine Honours to any created

ed Being, was made apparent to every Nation under Heaven. This may be aptly enough stiled, a Revelation of the Doctrine of the Unity to the Gentiles, as well as Jews, and a most sensible and severe *Caution* against a Plurality of Gods to all the World. Nay, this Account of God's Judgments upon *Pharaoh* and his People, for setting up false Deities, in downright Opposition to Heaven, and in open Defiance of the God of the Hebrews, was, to all that heard it with due Attention, a most severe Prohibition of Idolatry under any Shape or Figure; and was a clear Publication of the first Precepts in the *Decalogue*, to the Gentile Nations; forbidding them to pay any sort of Adoration to any created Thing whatsoever. For this well-grounded Relation, of the fearful Judgments inflicted upon *Egypt*, for rebelling against the God of *Israel*, was as full a Revelation of the Unity, as that Declaration from the holy Mount, *Thou shalt have none other Gods but me*. And at the same Time that the History of God's Judgments in *Egypt*, published the Doctrine of the Unity and Supremacy of *Jacob's* God, it subjoins its own Sanction, by setting forth the fearful Plagues which had been already inflicted upon *Pharaoh* and his People for their Rebellion against the supreme Lord of Heaven and Earth. There is indeed this Difference between the Doctrine of the Unity as revealed to the *Israelites* from the holy Mount, and

and its being conveyed to all the Heathen World, by the History of God's Judgments in *Egypt*, that the first was solemnly given by the Mouth of God, this to the Gentile World, not as by *direct Revelation*, but a Doctrine plainly deduceable from the *Egyptian Story*. For any thinking Man, who seriously reflected upon the terrible Plagues inflicted upon the Egyptians for their gross Idolatry, must see, that the Hand which wrought those Wonders, was far superior to the false Gods of *Egypt*, and to all created Beings. For notwithstanding the Gentile World might not have the same Account of the Egyptian Affair, as divine Authority has handed down to us, yet many of the Nations actually saw what we have heard, for that *Egypt* had been astonishingly punished by the God of *Israel*, and *Pharaoh* and his whole Army miraculously overthrown in the Red Sea, in their Pursuit after the Hebrews, could not be hid. These were such *alarming* Terrors, as must reach to far-distant Nations; and however the Egyptians might palliate the Matter, yet *Facts* could not be denied; and the *Footsteps* of God's Wonders wrought in *Egypt*, the Havock and Desolation the Plagues had left behind, the *Ruin* by the Locusts, the Famine by Hail, and the miserable Face of the Ground, were all too apparent, to escape the Notice of such Strangers, and travelling Merchant-men, as came into *Egypt* from all Parts of the World.

World. And no Doubt can be made, but that many among the Egyptians, who had been Eye-witnesses to the Wonders wrought by the God of *Jacob*, were too much struck with Awe of that tremendous Being, not to give as faithful an Account of the Matter, as they were able. This then they could not help doing to all Strangers that came into *Egypt*, who would naturally enough inquire into the History and Causes of the present ruinous Condition of the Land of *Egypt*: And the Egyptians, I think, neither durst nor would bely the Affair. They would honestly tell them, what a terrible Contest there had been between the Egyptians and the Hebrews, and between the God of *Israel* and their own Deities, and after what astonishing Manner *Jacob's* God had executed Vengeance upon all the Idols of *Egypt*; declaring, by his Ambassadors, that there was none other God but He in all the World.

This then being the Account given to all Foreigners, who came down to *Egypt* once a Year from all Parts to buy Corn (*Egypt* being of old the Granary of the East;) this Account, I say, of the mighty Wonders in *Egypt*, why they were wrought, and the Doctrine of the Unity deducible from this Account, would be spread about to every Part of the World. This would be a Proof of one Lord God, drawn from Facts, which to the Jews were made known by the Word of Revelation.

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We have seen, that one great and wise End for shewing those terrible Egyptian Wonders in the very Presence of so great a Prince as *Pharaoh*, and making *Egypt*, (the most populous City then in the World) the Scene of Action, was, that from thence, all other idolatrous Nations might learn to fear and tremble at the Name of the God of *Jacob*; to cast away their Abominations from them, and to serve the Living God only. Other great and wise Ends of these mighty Wonders, related more immediately to the Children of *Israel*, for whose Deliverance from Egyptian Bondage, those great Signs and Wonders had been principally wrought. These Things (as God tells *Moses*) were done, that the Children of *Israel* might keep God's great Power and mighty Works in Remembrance so long as they were a People; and hand them down from Father to Son in all Ages to come. — *That thou mayest* (says God, *Exod. X. 2.*) *tell in the Ears of thy Son, and of thy Son's Son, what Things I have wrought in Egypt; and my Signs which I have done amongst them, that ye may know that I AM the Lord.* It was to be unto *Israel* an everlasting Token of God's Love to his People, of his Indignation at false Gods, and to preserve the Doctrine of his Supremacy and Dominion over every other Being. It was likewise to be a perpetual Caution, against chiming in with the stupid Abominations, and impious Customs of those idolatrous

lacious Nations, whether they were a going. It was to keep them fixt and stedfast in their Reliance upon the true God, that God who had wrought such Wonders in the Land of Ham, and fearful Things by the Red Sea.

As we are now going to the Red Sea, let us inquire how the Children of *Israel* behaved when *Pharaoh* and his Army were just at their Heels; why truly, they seem to have already forgot what God had so lately done for them in *Egypt*; and though they had seen *Pharaoh* and this People, but a few Days ago, falling down for fear of them, and that Almighty God which had brought them out of *Egypt* with a high Hand, yet in the following manner are the Jews described, (*Exod. XIV. 11.*) *And they said unto Moses, Because there were no Graves in Egypt, hast thou brought us away to die in the Wilderness? Wherefore hast thou thus dealt with us, to bring us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the Word we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the Wilderness.* Dreadful Argument this, of the strange Perverseness of human Nature! But behold, *Moses*, in his native Meekness, waves their ungenerous Complaints, and encourages them not to distrust Heaven, but to stand still, and see the Salvation of the Lord; which, says the great Law-giver, he will shew you this Day. For the Egyptians

Egyptians whom ye have seen to Day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. And the fearful Overthrow of that People in the Red Sea, at the same Time that the Waters were as dry Ground to the Israelites, and a Wall of Succour, on the right Hand and on the Left, was such a marvellous Instance of God's great Loving-kindness to the Children of *Israel*, that when they saw their Enemies dead on the Sea Shore, they were, in Spite of the Perverseness of human Nature, forced to acknowledge and to fear the glorious Rock of their Salvation. Accordingly we find it thus related of the Children of *Israel*, that when they saw that last great Work of the Lord upon the Egyptians, *they feared the Lord, and believed the Lord and his Servant Moses.* This then was the Close of *Pharaoh's* Tragedy: From which we may learn, that the Heart of Man is capable of becoming so dreadfully hardened, whether by the natural Effect of habitual Impiety, or by a judicial Punishment, it matters not which, since in both Cases it is the Sinner's own Fault, as to set God himself at Defiance; and that such People are not to be reclaimed from their daring Impieties, by any Punishments in this World, or by any finite Expedients which infinite Power itself can inflict, unless God was to deprive his Creatures of free Agency, and compel these Sinners, in spite of their own Perverseness, to live and to be eternally happy: But as this would
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be unworthy a Being of infinite Wisdom, and breaking through the general Laws of Providence, let us assure ourselves, that this Eternal Happiness of Heaven is too *noble* an Inheritance, to be forced upon Men whether they will or no.

S E C T. III.

THE Conduct of the Egyptians, whose tragical History we have so lately beheld, presents us with such a black Picture of human Pride, invincible Obstinacy, and outrageous Contempt of the Supreme Being, with the terrible Judgments consequent thereupon, that we may be glad to get out of that dark Dominion of *Beelzebub* as fast as we can, and to quit the treacherous Banks of the *Nile*, where the subtle Spirits of Hell (those more dangerous Crocodiles) lurk in Ambush, and are always upon the Watch, to devour the Souls of every *heedless Wanderer*.

And that we may try to find out human Nature under some different Dress, from those idolatrous Habits of Egyptian Ignorance and Superstition; let us not think of returning back again to the tainted Land of *Ham*, but let us go to the Children of *Israel*, and see whether human Nature does not appear in a more lovely Apparel, amongst the People of the Lord, than what we hitherto beheld, amongst the Heathen Nations. And since we

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are, by a wondrous Miracle, safely conducted through the *Red Sea*, and introduced to a People, who had lately beheld such an astonishing Scene of Divine Judgments wrought in the Land of *Ham*, and wrought too for their Deliverance out of Egyptian Slavery, we might now expect quite different Conduct from Men thus highly distinguished of Heaven, and so lovingly redeemed from the Land of Bondage, by the visible Hand of God himself. Let us not however entertain too sanguine Hopes, or fondly imagine, that after the Children of *Israel* had once clean emerg'd out of Egyptian Darkness, they would then distinguish themselves by an *Obedience* to the Laws of God, as far Superior to *that* of the Gentile Nations, as God had distinguished them from all other People under Heaven. But alas, if we do but attend the Children of *Israel* from the Banks of the *Red Sea* through the Defarts of *Arabia*, we shall be sadly convinced, that human Nature is always too nearly the same, ever prone to rebel, and to set the Divine Laws at defiance. For that there has in all Ages of the World, been a Set of stubborn Men, whom neither God's fearful Judgments could reclaim, nor his greatest long-suffering invite to Repentance, the Conduct of this People, whose History I am now going to enter upon, is too tragical a Proof. For in this our Journey through the Wilderness, we shall find, that the Children of *Israel*

Israel had scarce set a Foot upon Arabian Ground, but they began to distrust in that Providence, of whose watchful Care and Protection, they had so many recent, and most convincing Proofs: They had but just ended their Song of Praise and Thanksgiving for that wonderful Deliverance at the Red Sea, but they broke out against *Moses* in these Words, *Would to God we had died by the Hand of the Lord in the Land of Egypt, when we sat by the Flesh-Pots, and when we did eat Bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this Wilderness to kill this whole Assembly with Hunger.* Incredible Absence of Thought! Thus to distrust the Hand of Providence, or to be so stupid, as to imagine, that God would bring them out of *Egypt* with such mighty Signs and Wonders, and after all this Solemnity, forsake his People, and suffer them to perish in the Wilderness through Thirst or Hunger. This was a Notion *in itself* absurd, a Reflection upon infinite Wisdom, would have afforded matter of Triumph to the Egyptians, confirm'd all the Heathen Nations in Idolatry, and made the *Enemies of Jacob's God to blaspheme that tremendous Name.* But yet for all this, God mercifully passes by the Indignity, and, in great Compassion to his People, gives them Water out of the Rock to drink, sends them Bread from Heaven, and the most delicious Fowl for their Contentment. But as this stubborn Conduct of the *Jews*, was be-

fore the giving of the Law from the Burning Mount, as the People had not yet been instructed how to demean themselves, by any Revelation of God's Will, in express and particular Terms, it will perhaps be thought some little Abatement of their Guilt: Well, such as it is, let them have it. And if we should allow that by the Deductions of Reason, that Divine Guide within, the Children of *Israel* might not probably conduct themselves so well as could be wished, yet how was it possible, for Men of the most slender Capacity, not to infer, that the same God who had already wrought so many Miracles, *Miracles* which their own Eyes had beheld, for the Redemption of his People, should not be able and willing, still to preserve their Lives, betrays such stupid Absence of Thought and Reflection, as could not be credited upon any Authority less than Divine. For supposing both the *Jews* Ideas of God's Omnipotence, and their Deductions therefrom, ever so unphilosophical, would not common Understanding tell them that He, who in *Egypt*, and at the *Red Sea* had superceded all the Laws of Nature, and done so many mighty Works for the Deliverance of his People, did them most certainly, for some greater *End*, than merely for the sake of slaying them by Famine in the Desarts of *Arabia*.

If God's Intentions had not been to have preserved the Lives of his People, he would
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never have redeemed them from the House of Bondage by such unheard of Wonders. Had God decreed to *put out the Name of Israel*, he could easily have done it, by one private Stroke of his Displeasure in *Egypt*, instead of bringing them into the Wilderness to die by Famine.

And when these Things are seriously considered, we can by no Means acquit the *Israelites*, for not arguing more rationally upon the Egyptian Wonders.

We will next enquire whether this People's Demeanour was much altered for the better, even after they had received the Law from the holy Mount, and had been instructed by the Voice of God, in the two grand Points of Religion, their Duty to God, and to their Neighbour. We are told, that when the *Israelites* heard the Voice of God, when they saw the Thunderings and Lightnings, and the holy Mountain burning at the Presence of Jehovah, they fell back for terror, and begged that God would vouchsafe to signify his divine Pleasure by *Moses*, and not speak to them, in such fearful Display of his Majesty, any more: And they likewise promise, that whatever God would command them, by the Message of *Moses*, they would observe and do it. But how soon they forgot both their own solemn Promise, and that amazing Display of God's Majesty and Power, at the giving of the Law from the burning Top of *Sinai*, their Behaviour,

viour, immediately after, too fully declares, For though *Moses* was gone up into the Mount to receive such farther Revelations, as Divine Wisdom might think most agreeable for that untractable People, yet because this People were only left a few Days to their own Imaginations, and had not, as usual, some great Display of Divine Power before their Eyes, they address themselves to *Aaron* in a Strain of Ignorance and Blasphemy, not to be expected from Men, who had seen so many amazing Instances of the Power and Majesty of *Jacob's* God. *Up, make us Gods that may go before us, for as for this * Moses, the Man that brought us up out of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.* And the Reason given for this impious Address to *Aaron* was, because *Moses* stayed longer with God in the Mount than they expected. How soon, and how stupidly had they forgot their late ardent Request to *Moses*, that he would be their † *Spokesman* between God and them? And yet for all this, when *Moses* was gone up into the holy Mount, to know the Pleasure of the Divine Being, and had received the two Tables of the Law from the immediate Hand of God, in order to rehearse those sacred Oracles to the People, according to their own most earnest Wishes, what does this People do, but immediately fall off from their own gracious God, and set up

* Exod. xxxii. 1.

† Exod. xx. 19.

a golden Calf in Imitation of *Apis* the Egyptian Idol. To this the Children of Israel offer Incense, and, with shocking Blasphemy, proclaim, * *These are thy Gods, O Israel, which brought thee out of the Land of Egypt.* And upon this, God hastens *Moses* down from the Mount, to signify his Abhorrence and Displeasure, at such an impious, foolish, and ungrateful Piece of Idolatry ; impious in them, above all Men, who had so lately seen the Outlines of God's Glory upon the Holy Mount ; and monstrous Ingratitude, so soon to forget that God, who alone had brought them out of *Egypt*, and was going to fulfil his Promise, by putting them in Possession of a Land, flowing with all the Comforts and Blessings of Life. And as to the Folly of this idolatrous Act, in making a molten Calf, after the Likeness of the Egyptian God called *Apis*, nothing could come up to it : For the *Hebrews* could not possibly forget, in so little Time, the Vengeance, which their own God had executed against all the false Deities of *Egypt*. And surely nothing could be a stronger Proof, even to the Egyptians, as well as to the *Hebrews*, that *Jacob's* God was infinitely superior to all the Idols of *Egypt*, forasmuch, as when *Pharaoh's* Sorcerers were, by the Assistance of evil Spirits, permitted to work some Miracles in Opposition to *Moses* and *Aaron*, yet these Men could

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* Exod. xxxii. 4.

not remove the Plagues they wrought; Recourse was always had to the Servants of *Jacob's* God, to beg of him to interpose. *Pharaoh's* Magicians were, for a Time, permitted to do Harm, and to turn the Waters into Blood, but it was not in the Power of those Instruments of Darkness to do Good, or to restore the corrupted Waters to their native Purity. *Pharaoh* was always forced to apply to *Moses* and *Aaron* to beg of God to remove those Plagues out of the Land, which his own Pride had called down upon him. This therefore being a full Manifestation of the great Power and Supremacy of that glorious God, who brought Israel out of *Egypt*, what are we to think, when that very People have forgot their great Deliverer? and attribute their merciful Redemption from Egyptian Servitude, to a lumpish Piece of dead Metal, that could not even move itself; crying out to the molten Calf, *These, O Israel, are thy Gods, which brought thee out of the Land of Egypt.* This is such an Instance of blasphemous Ingratitude, and stupid Forgetfulness of their mighty Redeemer, that I should most gladly with the * Rabbins, cast this Piece of Idolatry, not upon God's own People, but upon that mixed Multitude, which went up with them from *Egypt*, did not

* Nam Rabbini non Aaronem tantum, sed et ipso Israelitos ab Idololatria excusant. Culpam Idololatriæ conjiciunt in promiscuam et vilem turbam, quæ ex Egypto eos comitabantur. *Vid. Syn. Crit. in Locum.*

not the contrary so plainly appear from the whole Account of this Affair ; for God commanded the Tribe of *Levi* to put every Man his Sword upon his Side, and to slay every Man his Neighbour, or Brother, on Account of this stupid Crime. And as the Jews, God's peculiar People, were the Men punished, they undoubtedly (some of them) were the Men that were guilty of this most shocking Piece of Idolatry. From the foregoing Conduct therefore of the Jews, we see that some Men are not to be kept from going astray, without daily Miracles, and supernatural Means ; and that even these, when common, are disregarded, and some new, and greater Wonders become always necessary to convince an obstinate, perverse Mind, that will not give Ear to the express Commands of God, nor to his wise Dispensations in the ordinary Course of Things. But if wicked Men are not to be reclaimed without Miracles, if neither the Dictates of Reason alone, nor these, further explained and enforced by a more explicit Revelation, will not open the Eyes of Men, they may depend upon it, God will go no further : Heaven will never obtrude eternal Happiness upon the most hardened and notorious Sinners, and then even take it as a Favour, if these Men will accept of a Happiness thus *obtruded* upon them. And yet for all this, we are told from the Press, by a Man who is ashamed of his Name,

Name, that * “ all Mankind, even such as
 “ live and die in wilful Contempt of God and
 “ his Laws, *shall be finally happy.*”

But to advance such a Lye against God, to misinterpret the true Sense of Scripture, to be such a Dupe and Laughing-Stock of Reprobate Spirits, by endeavouring to encourage all the World to murder, rob and blaspheme, and then tell them, that Heaven's Gates are still open, and that they will all be for ever happy, is a Crime a Man would not be guilty of, for ten Thousands of Worlds : And whoever is such a Stranger to the true Meaning of the Scriptures, and so weak as to give Credit to this destructive Opinion, will one Day curse the deluded Author of such Blasphemy ; and may lament his own Folly, in that miserable Eternity, which the impious Witlings of this polite Age, ridicule and banter, as a mere political Invention to trick and deceive the credulous Multitude.

S E C T. IV.

AS we have seen the Conduct of the Israelites at the Foot of the Holy Mount, and the Punishment which their stupid Idolatry brought upon them, the very Moment they offended ; one would never expect to hear, that the same Men would so soon dare

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* *Heaven open to all Men.*

to provoke the Almighty to punish them again. But if we only accompany the Israelites from Mount *Sinai* to *Taberah*, we shall find them breaking out into Murmurings and unreasonable Complaints upon every Occasion: When the Lord heard them, it is recorded, (*Num. XI. 1.*) *that his Anger was kindled, and that the Fire of the Lord burnt amongst them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost Parts of the Camp.* But upon the People's crying out to *Moses* under this fearful Punishment, and his praying to the Lord for them, God was pleased to withhold the Vengeance they had so justly provoked, and *the Fire of Heaven was quenched.* If from *Taberah* we attend this People to *Kibroth*, still nothing but Murmurs and Seditions are to be heard: *Who shall give us Flesh to eat?* is the clamorous Outcry of this discontented, sensual People: *We remember, say they, (Num. XI. 5.) the Flesh which we did eat in Egypt freely, &c. but now our Soul is dry'd away, there is nothing at all besides this Manna before our Eyes.* What a Picture does this present us with, of an ungrateful and carnal Mind? They seem to have no higher Notions of Things, than those of the mere *Animal Life.* The gross and sordid Food of *Egypt*, the Bulk of these Men esteemed their *greatest* Good, and the Pots of rank Flesh, and the stinking Leeks of the Land of *Ham*, were, to these Sensualists, by far more preferable than the Bread of Heaven.

Heaven. But however, God still vouchsafed to gratify the Cravings of this discontented People, yet at the same Time gives to all Mankind this useful *Document*, that when we make unreasonable Requests to God, and, after our own carnal Minds, ask such Things as are not convenient, it is our greatest Punishment to be heard and indulged: For these Lusts were no sooner gratified in their Longings after grosser Food, but even *while the Flesh was yet between their Teeth, the Wrath of the Lord was kindled against the People; and the Lord smote the People with a very great Plague.* And the Place where this Divine Vengeance was executed, had its Name from the tragical Event, being called *Kibroth-Hattaavah*, or, *the Graves of Lust*, because there the Carcases of those Men were buried, who had lusted after the Flesh-pots of *Egypt*. *

From *Kibroth-Hattaavah* we pass on to *Hazereth*, where nothing material relating to the People is left upon Record. But it being at *Hazereth* where *Aaron* and *Miriam* contended with *Moses* in these Words, *Hath the Lord spoken only by Moses? Hath he not spoken also by us?* I shall observe upon this Passage, how ready God himself always is, to protect and defend those that are meek and humble: For it is said, that *the Man Moses was very † meek, above all the Men which were upon the Face of the whole Earth;*

* Vid. Numb. xi. 34.

† Vid. Numb. xii. 3.

Earth; which is, as if it had been expressly affirmed, that notwithstanding this ungenerous and dispirited Behaviour of *Aaron* and *Miriam*, *Moses* put it up with the utmost Moderation and Evenness of Temper. And upon this Account, God himself takes the Cause of of his injured Servant into his own Hand; calls the two Offenders to come before him with his Servant *Moses*, and, in dreadful Display of his Anger, thus addresses *Aaron* and *Miriam*; *Hear now my Words, If there be a Prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a Vision, and will speak to him in a Dream: But my Servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all my House: And with him will I speak Mouth to Mouth, even apparently, and not in dark Speeches, and the Similitude of the Lord shall be behold: Wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my Servant Moses? And the Anger of the Lord was kindled against them, and he departed from them.* *

This affords us an eminent Proof of that exalted Favour to which *Moses* was admitted, above every other Competitor, and could not, one would think, fail of establishing the Reputation and Superiority of this Divine Ambassador, above the rest of his Brethren. It is worthy to be remarked from this Piece of sacred History, that notwithstanding *Moses* was thus highly favoured of Heaven, and was, with great familiarity admitted to talk with God,

* Numb. xii.

God, as a Man does with his Friend, still he assumed to himself no *proud State* upon that Account; but by his humble and affable Deportment, has left this fine Example upon Record, that the higher Men are placed in Dignity and Honour, the more *condescending* and gentle their Behaviour should always be: By this Means they would add a true Lustre to their Station, command Respect from all, not by Virtue of their high Rank, but that of their own amiable and gentle Demeanour. And were I disposed to compare Men or Things together, I might observe how diametrically opposite this lovely Deportment of the great Legislator is to some modern Conservators of the Divine Law. For though this great *Favourite* of Heaven was admitted into the *awful Secrets* of Jehovah, though he had been highly favoured with a View of the transcendent Glory of *Jacob's God*, and was intrusted with the great Pandects of Heaven, yet all these noble Privileges did not exalt this Man of God above Measure: The more he knew of the Divine Attributes, the better he knew his own Imperfections, and saw from thence what Folly in Grain it was, for Dust and Ashes (though ever so highly exalted in the Sight of Men) to be proud and over-bearing.

I have often thought what Pity it is, that this meek and gentle Deportment of *Moses*, should not be more religiously copied by those Men, whom Divine Providence has placed

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in *Moses's* Seat. How amiable would Religion appear, if her great *Guardians*, and venerable Fathers, would, by their own shining Examples, encourage that Meekness, Humility, and gentle Nature, which Christianity so earnestly recommends to all its Votaries? This Part, however, of the Character of *Moses* is a standing Lesson against all Kinds of Spiritual Pride, and over-bearing Behaviour amongst Fellow-Creatures, be their Rank what it will: And what, I wonder, would the great Jewish Lawgiver say to that *Man* of Sin, who sits as God, in the Temple of God? Or, How would *Moses* have condemned the Haughtiness and Vanity of those Scribes and Pharisees, who afterwards sat in his Chair, and brought Religion itself into Contempt, by their ostentatious Fopperies and Spiritual Pride? And I can't but confess, how much it must needs surfeit every thinking Man, to hear a Set of ignorant Enthusiasts boasting of their spiritual Knowledge, and supernatural Gifts, when *Moses*, who had so often talked with God Face to Face, and was even admitted into the deep Arcana of Jehovah, still never once plumed himself on that Account: For the nearer he was admitted to behold the Effulgence and Majesty of the Deity, the more Reason he found to be meek and gentle to Men, and to *walk humbly with his God*.

Let us now pass on with the Israelites from *Hazereth*, farther into the Wilderness of *Paran*:

When

When they were come to *Kadesh*, * God commands *Moses* to send twelve Men (a Man out of each Tribe) to search out the Land of *Canaan*, which God had promised to give to them for an Inheritance. This Command *Moses* immediately puts in Execution: The Searchers depart, examine the Country, see the Manners and Dispositions of the various Inhabitants, and, upon their Return, they present the People with the Fruits of the Land, assure them it was, what Fame had always said of it, a Land of Plenty, *flowing with Milk and Honey*. But we are to know withal, that ten out of the twelve, in great Cowardice, bring up a false and evil Report of the Land, as if it was full of Giants, and had Cities too high and strong, ever to think of taking them. Upon this Report, the People are meanly intimidated, and break out into their usual Complaints, *Would God we had died in Egypt; or, would God we had died in the Wilderness*; and then, in downright Defiance of Providence, they said one to another, *Let us make a Captain; † and let us return to Egypt*. When this impious Resolution was made known, *Moses* and *Aaron* fell down on their Faces, before the Congregation of the Children of Israel, to beg of them as they valued their Lives, or dreaded the Vengeance of Heaven, to desist immediately from such an execrable

* Numb. xiii.

† Vid. Numb. xiv. 4.

execrable Piece of Stupidity, lest divine *Wrath* should cut them off by one sudden Blow. And that the People might be kept back from this Madness, two of those very Men, *Joshua* and *Caleb*, who had been to explore the Land, ran to them with their Cloaths rent, and they spake unto the People, saying, *The Land thro' which we passed to search it, is an exceeding good Land. If the Lord delight in us, then will he bring us into this Land, to give it us, a Land flowing with Milk and Honey: Only, rebel not ye against the Lord, nor fear the People of the Land, for they are Bread for us. Their Defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us.* This was speaking like Men of true Courage, for their Courage was founded in Religion. But what kind of Treatment, these great good Men got in return for their salutary Advice to the People, let us hear the People's Words, *all the Congregation bad stoned them with Stones.* This was hard return to *Joshua* and *Caleb*, for their generous Offices, and confirms the truth of what *Aaron* had before observ'd, * that *this People were set on Mischief.* They no sooner were pardoned one Crime, but they committed a greater, and seem'd resolv'd to try God's long-sufferings to the utmost.

My next Business, upon this part of sacred History, shall be to shew the great Sin and Folly

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* *Exod. xxxii. 22.*

Folly of that Proposal of the People, to make to themselves a Captain, in spite of Heaven, and, under his Direction, to turn back again into the Land of Bondage; and then I will make some Remarks upon the Conduct of the *Israelites*, in this their Station at *Kadesh-Barnea*, in the Wilderness of *Paran*. I am first to shew the Folly and Sin of the Peoples Proposals to return back again into *Egypt*, under some other Leader than *Moses*, the great Champion of Heaven: This will appear in few Lines, for what Folly could equal that of thinking to return into *Egypt*, without that supernatural Assistance which had brought them out of it? and how cou'd they be so lost to common Sense, as to imagine that God wou'd any longer protect them with his Almighty Arm, after they had thus impiously rebelled against him, and taken themselves out of the Hands of Providence; confiding wholly in their own strength, and thinking to return to *Egypt* by mere human Aid? Fools! not to consider, that the same Miracles, by which they had hitherto been preserv'd in the wide howling Wilderness, wou'd be more necessary in their Return than in their first Advances. Where wou'd they get Bread to eat, or find Water to drink without the Hand of God interposing as usual? How did they think to repass the *Red Sea*? or what kind of Reception did they expect to meet with in *Egypt*, even supposing it possible for them (which
humanly

humanly speaking it was not) to return thither again, who did they think would bring them Water out of the stony Rock, rain down Bread from Heaven, or give them Flesh to eat? All these Necessaries of Life they wou'd want, but these, the dreary barren Wilderness, thro' which they were oblig'd to pass, could not afford. They could not, in that solitary Desert, be supported one single Day without a Miracle. But had they not forsook that gracious Being, who was wont, in Mercy, to defend and feed them with his marvellous Bounties? These would now be utterly withheld: They would be left wholly to the Mercy of the devouring Wilderness, and its savage Inhabitants: They would soon have been swallowed up in Gulphs or Quick-sands: The Glory of *Israel* was departed: They would neither have had the Pillar of the splendid Cloud to lead them the Way by Day, nor the Pillar of Fire to guide them by Night: All these glorious Privileges would have been utterly at an end, nor can any Situation be conceived so piteous and forlorn, as that, which these unhappy Men would have been in, had God permitted them to pursue their own Scheme, by attempting to return back again into *Egypt*, an Attempt in which, humanly speaking, not so much as one single Soul wou'd ever be heard of again; which shews at once the Folly and Impiety of that Proposal, *let us make a Captain, and let us return into Egypt.*

My next Design was to make some Remarks upon the Conduct of the People, during their Abode at *Kadesh*. First let us take Notice, that the only Cause of the People's Murmuring at this Place was, because they might not be put in Possession of the Promised Land, without the least Degree of Labour or Fatigue. They cou'd not bear the most distant Thoughts of encountering the Heathen Nations, whom the dastardly Spies had describ'd under such imagery of Terror as made them appear, to the faint-hearted *Israelites*, Men absolutely unconquerable: To human Power, the Sons of *Anak* really might be so, but the Children of *Israel* had seen so many Instances of supernatural deliverances, that nothing, but the grossest Inattention to their own History, could make them afraid of any created Being, nor of all the Powers of Nature, so long as the Rock of their Defence incamped around them. But these Men had either forgot the late Wonders of God, in their miraculous Preservation, or else Guilt, ever foreboding its own well deserv'd Vengeance, made them break out into those mean and cowardly Expressions, *would God we had died in Egypt, Why are we brought out here into the Wilderness?* This perverse, and impious Distrust of God's Goodness and Power, almost put the Almighty to a Stand, as if there was no other Medium of dealing with Men of such resolv'd Perverseness, but either to cut them all off at one sudden *Blow*, as one single Man,

Man, or else daily to work some new Miracle, merely to gratify the Wantonness and Caprice of an unreasonable People. The first was not consistent with the gracious Designs, and repeated Promises of the Almighty, unless the whole People had been involved in the same Guilt; nor could God have comply'd with the second, without rendering Miracles cheap in themselves, and consequently ineffectual for those wise and great Ends, for which they are always wrought. And when People are so far advanced in Infidelity, as to reduce the Almighty to the foregoing Difficulty, they may (in the very Nature of Things) expect that God will sooner utterly cut off such Men out of the Land of the Living, for the visible Terror of other notorious Sinners, than suffer Miracles to be held in Contempt, as they certainly would be, when these Displays of God's Power once became common. Next, we may observe, that both the Men who brought up an evil Report of the promised Land, and those Dastards that gave Credit to it, called down this temporal Evil upon the whole People of Israel, that they were condemned upon this Account, to wander forty tedious Years longer in the Wilderness, before they were admitted into the Land of Promise. For though the Children of Israel were now got to *Kadesh-Barnea*, and within the very *Sight* of their promised Inheritance, yet God thus commands them, *To-Morrow turn you, and get you*

*into the Wilderness, by the Way of the Red Sea. And that they were to wander in the dreary Deserts of Arabia forty Years, * we thus read, And your Children shall wander in the Wilderness forty Years, and bear your Whoredoms, until your Carcases be wasted in the Wilderness. After the Number of the Days in which ye searched the Land, even forty Days, (each Day for a Year) shall you bear your Iniquities, even forty Years, and ye shall know my Breach of Promise. I the Lord have said, I will surely do it to all this evil Congregation, that are gathered together against me. This forty Years wandering then, was the Effect of the People's cowardly Murmurings, and groundless Fears: And God declares, that not one single Soul which came out of Egypt (except Joshua and Caleb) should enter into the Land of Promise: † Because all those Men, says God, which have seen my Glory, and my Miracles which I did in Egypt, and in the Wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten Times, and have not bearkened to my Voice; surely they shall not see the Land which I swear unto their Fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me, see it. And when Moses told the People what Sentence God had decreed against them, and how by their stupid Rebellion and Distrust of his Goodness and Power, they had utterly excluded themselves from ever entering into the Land of Canaan, even when they were arrived*

* Vide Num. xiv. 33. et seq. † Num. xiv. 22, 23.

utterly excluded from that blissful Abode. This may convey to us all, this practical Lesson, that we can never make ourselves too secure of Eternal Happiness, and that even when we are upon the very Confines of Heaven, we may, by some rash, indiscreet Step, hurl ourselves headlong into the Pit of Perdition.

And as the Land of Promise was, to the Jews at least, a Type of the Heavenly *Jerusalem*, so, whether the utter Exclusion of those wicked, perverse Men, who had seen so many wonderful Displays of God's Power, was not both to them, and to all other incorrigible Sinners, a fearful Type of being eternally excluded from the *Jerusalem* which is above, is a Hint that may deserve some little Notice. But however, from what we have hitherto seen of the Behaviour of the Israelites, in the Desarts of *Arabia*, it affords us too true a Specimen of human Perverseness, and furnishes us with fresh, corroborating Instances, that Men may be so fatally hardened in Infidelity, as not to be reclaimed either by the greatest Mercies, or the most fearful temporal Punishments. God had often try'd both these Methods of proceeding, he had ever signified his Displeasure at Sin, by inflicting immediate Vengeance upon the Sinner; and he as constantly manifested his Approbation of Piety and Obedience, by some great and singular temporal Blessing; but neither of these seem to have been regarded by that stiff-necked People:

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The stubborn Israelites were not to be wrought upon either by Arguments of Fear or of Love; the Rod of Divine Vengeance they forgot or despised, the Moment the Blow was over; and the great Rewards of Obedience, whether already experienced, or expressly promised them hereafter, had no kind of Weight with many amongst them; there were some, Proof against all the wise Methods of Conviction: The mighty Wonders which they had so often beheld, were deemed as nothing, and God's Promises to Obedience, and Threatnings to wilful Perverseness, were all to no Purpose. The Sinners among them, were indeed, while the Hand of Divine Wrath lay heavy upon them, in outward Appearance convinced of their Folly; but when the Punishment of Disobedience was once removed, they disobeyed again, and their *last Error, was always worse than the first.*

It was this incredible Abuse of Liberty and Reason, that made the Almighty thus expostulate with *Moses: How long will this People provoke me, and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the Signs which I have shewed amongst them? I will smite them with the Pestilence, and will disinherit them.* Not but infinite Wisdom knew from the Beginning, how this People, and all his Creatures would act, and that many of them would abuse that glorious Boon of unrestrained Liberty; yet, as the Divine Being cannot, in Man's present State,

State, communicate his Counsels, but by human Forms of Speech, in order to familiarize and explain his own wise Dispensations, he thus addresses himself to *Moses*, that from thence it might appear, how Man would reason and judge of the Ways of Heaven in the Jewish Story.

And the Behaviour of *Moses*, whenever God threatened to cut off the Children of Israel, was such as could not but figure out the Doctrine and Necessity of a future Mediator between God and Man. For when upon *Moses's* Intercession for the People, God was always graciously pleased to remit the Punishment, who could be so blind as not to see in this Procedure of the Almighty, both the Necessity of an Atonement for Sin, and of some Divine Intercessor and Mediator, between a God so often offended, and Man always the wilful Offender? What Reason therefore have we to rejoice, who have that comfortable Doctrine of a Mediator brought to perfect Light by the Gospel? Which though visible enough to every thinking Man amongst the Jews, still to the Bulk of the People, it was dark and obscure. And as it is our glorious Privilege to to enjoy the bright Beams of the Gospel in their fullest Splendor, what will our Condemnation be, if, after all these accumulated Advantages, we still continue wilfully blind?

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S E C T. V.

THAT the Children of Israel had often murmured against God, and frequently upbraided Moses for bringing them out of Egypt, is now, I believe, a Subject that we are all well acquainted with : But the Names of the principal Men in the Congregation have been all along concealed, till we come to that Part of the Hebrew Story, recorded in Numb. xvi. This Chapter opens in these Words : *Now Korah the Son of Izhar, the Son of Kohath, the Son of Levi ; and Dathan and Abiram the Sons of Eliab ; and On the Son of Peleth, Sons of Reuben, took Men, and they gathered themselves together against Moses, and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the Congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is amongst them : Wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the Congregation of the Lord ?* This presents us with the first true Picture of those ugly Spectres, Rebellion in the State, and Schism in the Church : These turbulent Men could not bear to be under any Subjection : Their Pride and Envy were too outrageous to brook Submission to *Moses* any longer, though he had so often been visibly declared the great Substitute of Heaven, and an Ambassador between God and all the People. And so dreadfully were these Men swelled

led with a vain Conceit of their own superior Piety and Holiness, that they imagined they had a better Title to the Priesthood than *Aaron*, though called of God to that sacred Dignity; for that they wanted to thrust *Aaron* out of the Priesthood, is evident from the Reply of *Moses* in the 10th verse, and so high an Opinion had these Men of the superior Holiness of their own Party, as to set it off in such Terms of Boasting, as were little better than Blasphemy; affirming, that *all the Congregation were holy, every one of them, and that the Lord was among them*. By these Expressions, they seem resolved to exclude *Moses* out of his Government in the State, and to expel *Aaron* out of the Church; for when, with such an Air of spiritual Confidence, they don't blush to affirm, that all the Congregation are holy every one of them, what is this but directly levelling at *Aaron*, and his sacred Office? It was giving out, that since the People were all holy, what Need of *Aaron's* Ministration, or of any Rites of Religion and Purification, when the People were all righteous, pure and holy, already. Or, even supposing the Priestly Office necessary to be continued, yet, these Men declare that they are as fit for that sacred Dignity as *Aaron* could be; and since they were in their own vain Opinion, all holy, what Necessity was there for the Priesthood to be confined to the House of *Aaron* only? Thus far then they strike at *Aaron* and his sacred Office; and they

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they declare, by these Words, *the Lord is among them*, that they think they have no farther Need of *Moses* to be their Prince and Leader; for as the boasted universal Holiness of these Men made them all qualified as they thought, for the Priesthood, so by declaring that God is in the midst of them, they seem to think the regal Power of *Moses* as great a Usurpation in the State, as the Hierarchy of *Aaron* was in the Church. These Men were for overturning all Order, and for reducing the Authority of both Church and State to such a pleasing Level, where no one could stand on higher Ground than his Fellow.

This indeed was a very popular Argument, by which specious Pretence the People's Vanity and Ignorance were equally soothed. But this was all mere Farce and affected Zeal, in order to dupe the credulous unthinking Multitude. For the true State of the Case was, that *Korah* and *Dathan* wanted that Authority of *Moses* and *Aaron*, which one held, in the Church, the other in the State, to be transferred over to themselves. They had no other Objection to the regal Power, or ecclesiastical Authority, but because the Administration thereof was not in their own Hands. This was the very Reason of all their groundless Clamour against *Moses* and *Aaron*; and that they might gain ignorant Dupes, ever fond of Change and Novelties, to join in the impious Attempt. They address the Multi-
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tude in the grossest Strains of blasphemous Adulation (*viz.*) *The Congregation are holy every one of them, and the Lord is amongst them.*

The true Case of *Korah's* and his Companions Sedition being stated, let us now turn our Eyes upon *Moses*, and see how like a truly wise and good Man, he conducted this whole Affair. He did not pretend to be sole Judge in his own and his Brother's Cause, but refers the Issue of this Matter to the Decree of that righteous unerring Judge, with whom there is *no respect of Persons*. And he spake unto *Korah*, and unto all his Company, saying, *Even to Morrow the Lord will shew who are his, and who is holy; will cause him to come near unto him. This do ye, take ye Censers, Korah and all his Company, and put Fire therein, and put Incense in them before the Lord to Morrow; and it shall be, that the Man whom the Lord shall choose, he shall be holy.* And upon the Event of this it was to appear, whether the Priesthood was to be continued to *Aaron*, or to be transferred to *Korah* and his mutinous Associates. Here then the Fate of ecclesiastical Authority rested: And as to the regal Power, exercised by *Moses*, and against which, *Dathan* and *Abiram* openly rebelled, positively refusing to pay Attendance in the Tabernacle at the Request of the great Lawgiver, *Moses* refers the Decision of this likewise, to the righteous Judgment of that God, whose great Ambassador he was. For *Moses* puts the Lawfulness

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fulness of his Authority upon this Issue, *Hereby shall ye know, that the Lord hath sent me to do all these Things; for I have not done them of mine own Mind. If these Men die the common Death of all Men, or if they be visited after the Visitation of all Men, then the Lord hath not sent me. But if the Lord make a new Thing, and the Earth open her Mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the Pit, then ye shall understand, that these Men have provoked the Lord.* And behold the fearful Catastrophe of these seditious Men! For *Moses* had no sooner done speaking, but the Ground clave asunder under them, and the Earth opened her Mouth, and all that appertained unto them went down alive into the Pit, and the Earth closed upon them, and they perished from among the Congregation. Thus it was that God manifested his Displeasure at those seditious Men, who under a Pretence of superior Sanctity, wanted to subvert all Order and good Government, both in Church and State. And as God, by his miraculous Interposition, established the Authority of his Servants, *Moses* and *Aaron*, beyond all future Cavils of any envious and enterprizing Competitors, I think from this horrible Punishment, so indiscriminately inflicted upon *Korah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, with their Wives, their * Sons, and even their little

* That the Sons of *Korah*, are to be excepted out of the Number of those Men, who came to this fearful End,
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the ones, as appears from the Context, we may very rationally deduce the Necessity of a future State. For this Punishment, upon Supposition there was no future State, could not be easily reconciled to the Divine Justice. This Stroke of Vengeance, in which all the Relatives of *Dathan* and *Abiram* were promiscuously involved, was not (if this Life was all that belonged to them) at all consistent with that Idea of Divine Justice, of rendering to everyone according to his Deserts. And if all thy Souls thus promiscuously swallowed up, were never more to appear in Judgment, then these following Questions would be sooner asked than answered, *viz.* Were every Individual amongst that Company which perished equally involved in Guilt? Were the little Children belonging to *Dathan* and *Abiram*, the same Objects of Divine Wrath as their wicked

is evident from Numb. xxvi. 11. And the Commentators upon this Chapter assign the following Reasons why the Sons of *Korah*, were not swallowed up in the hideous Ruin, *viz.* that *Korah's* Sons did not assent to their Father's Rebellion; or that if they did, they afterwards repented, and desisted from that bold and impious Attempt. But I am of Opinion, that the Sons of *Korah* were, at that juncture of Time, busied in the inferior Offices of the Sanctuary: This is also *Piscator's* Conjecture, cited by the Author of the Synopsis, and it is farther confirmed from Numb. xxvi. 58. where the Family of the *Korathites*, are numbered amongst the *Levites*, whose Office, amongst other Services of the Tabernacle, it was to compose Divine Hymns for the Use of the Hebrew Choir, and, with a chearful Voice, to lift up these sacred Songs to the Praise of the God of *Jacob*.

ed seditious Parents? If they were, then it would follow that Children may be Objects of God's Displeasure, and of his Punishments, before they are able to know Good from Evil, or can any ways be deemed as moral, and as such accountable Agents. But this, I presume, few Men will agree to. And if the Sons and little Ones of *Dathan* and *Abiram*, were not equally involved in the Sedition and Rebellion of their Parents, then either the Punishment of the Sons and little Ones of *Dathan* was greater than they deserved, or else that of their impious Parents was less. To say the first, and to affirm that God might not (consistently with his Justice) cut off the whole Race of *Dathan* and *Abiram*, Infants as well as others, is what I dare not do. But then if God might do this, it was because the Souls of these Infants were still in the Hands of him that gave them; and though they were equally cut off with their seditious Parents, in the Sight of Men, and were all alike punished in this World, yet undoubtedly Things were not thus finally to end. For that this Irregularity was to be adjusted in some future eternal State, is what the Divine Justice is too nearly concerned in to let the Innocent and the Guilty perish alike. Besides, the Punishment inflicted on these wicked Men, considering the horrid Aggravation of their Guilt, was by no Means adequate to their Crimes; for though the Manner of their Death was a new Thing,

and a most dreadful Instance of Divine Wrath, yet as to that Torture and Agony, with which these Men pass'd out of Life, it was by no means so bad as that poor Wretch, who gather'd Sticks on the Sabbath Day, underwent by the express Command of God. If *Dathan* therefore and *Abiram* were to meet with no farther Reckoning in a future State, they fared much better than many other Violaters of the Laws of God, who were less Guilty, but more severely punished. But as this would be a Proceedure unworthy of Divine Justice, especially in that State where God was *visibly* supreme in all Matters, what less can be reasonably inferr'd from the different Degrees of Guilt amongst that Company, which went down in full strength into *Hades*, but that they are all to be rais'd again from the invisible Shades, that every Individual may receive the due Reward of his Deeds. That obstinate Company which went down alive into their Graves, and upon whose Bodies the Earth closed again, and utterly conceal'd them from the sight of Mortals, yet the Souls of these Men were certainly kept in their respective invisible, and separate States, to the final *Judgment of the great Day*. And the vindictive Earth which had swallow'd the Bodies of those seditious Men, will undoubtedly give them up again, at that awful Hour, when the Sea, and all deep Places shall discover their Dead. For the Crimes of *Dathan* and *Abiram* were

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too atrocious and inexcuseable, to escape unpunish'd in some future State: And tho' the Law, as given by *Moses*, does not inculcate the Doctrine of the Resurrection in express Terms, yet whoever reads the Writings of *Moses* with proper Attention, must from thence plainly infer the necessity of a future State of Rewards and Punishments. For if but so much as one single Instance can be produc'd, of the Inequality of temporal Rewards and Punishments, while the *Israelites* lived under the Theocracy, * then it must follow, that a God of Justice and Goodness will wisely regulate and adjust these Matters in the next World, which, for Reasons best known to himself, he did not bring about in this. This present Life, was never meant, since the Fall, to be a State of equal distribution of Rewards and Punishments, but, by withholding this equal Retribution, God design'd it as a Trial of our Faith and Obedience. For if good Men were to be always rewarded in this World according to their Merits, and the Wicked constantly punish'd in Proportion to their Guilt, the first wou'd never bear to leave the World, nor the notorious Sinners suffer'd to live in it.

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* As the present unequal Distribution of Rewards and Punishments has been generally deem'd a demonstrative Argument in proof of a future State, I must needs own I think this interesting Doctrine may, *e fortiori*, be clearly prov'd from the Conduct of human Nature in that State where Virtue and Vice were always respectively punish'd and rewarded in this Life.

This World would then cease to be what it certainly is, a State of Trial, and not of Happiness. But as this World is not to be the Scene of equal Rewards or Punishments, as the Riches and Honours of this present State are frequently the Portion of the Wicked and Profane, while the virtuous good Man is oppress'd with Grief, and combats with various Misfortunes, it is to the *General* Audit of the whole World, that all these things must be referr'd. For the second Covenant gives us full Assurance, that all who are in the Graves will hear the alarming Voice of that supreme and most *equitable* Judge, who will render unto every Man according to his *Deeds*, whether they be Good, or whether they be Evil.

S E C T. VI.

IF the Doctrine of a future State, may be plainly deduced from the History of *Dathan* and *Abiram*, who, with their Wives, Sons and little Children, were all alike swallow'd up in one promiscuous Ruin, then this momentous Truth will still be more apparent, when we come to view the Divine Proceedure with respect to the Promulgation of the Law, and some other Particulars relating to the Jewish Legislator himself. For notwithstanding this *important Truth* is not set down in express Terms, in the written Institutes of *Moses*, yet, take away this powerful Sanction of future Rewards

Rewards and Punishments, and the whole written Law would be in Reality, what the ignorant Jews made it, a mere dead Letter. And I would fain be informed by those Men who won't allow a future State to make any Part of the Law of *Moses*, what we must think of that stupendous, and fearful Display of God's Majesty and Glory, with which the Law was delivered from the burning Mount. Was all this *in terrorem* for the present Life only? Was this visible terrifick Scenery at the Promulgation of the Law, to be only for the sake of frightening poor Earthly Creatures, who in a few Years were to be utterly depriv'd of Existence? What End could a Being of undoubted Wisdom and Goodness propose, by such a fearful Manifestation of his Power, to a Set of perishable Mortals, as would soon be no more? For if we set aside a future State, all Mankind might then be look'd upon as already dead; and tho' Men just breathed and moved about for the space of three or fourscore Years, still, in this Case, it would be no better than a kind of lingering Death; and Man, for all his boasted Knowledge, would be less happy, and not at all superior to the Beasts that perish. Besides, it might be justly enough demanded, upon supposition that Man's Existence terminated in this Life, why he had any written revealed Precepts given him for the Conduct and Regulation of himself, sooner than Brutes. For tho' I am well apprized that

that the Answer to this Demand will be, that one was endued with Reason, and consequently an accountable Creature, but that Brutes, not having this noble Dower, were, upon that Account, improper Subjects, to whom any such revealed Rules of Conduct were necessary. This, as far as it extends, is a very proper Answer, but yet, the very Reason given, why God should reveal his Will to Man, and lay him down Rules for his Conduct is, because Man is an accountable Creature; and it is under this very Definition of Man, that Man has an Interest in some after Existence, and that neither his Hopes, nor his Fears, can be confined to this Life only. 'Twas upon this very Account that Man had a Law given him, and was, by repeated Revelations, as well as the fixed unalterable Voice of Reason, instructed how to regulate his Conduct, so as to render himself an Object of God's Favour and Protection. Man, we say, is an accountable Creature, because he is enriched with those Endowments which constitute him answerable for his Conduct; but if Man has no Account to give up in a future State, if both himself and his Actions sink, when he dies, into eternal Oblivion, it would seem not a little to reflect upon the Wisdom of the Divine Being, for thus highly distinguishing Man, first with Reason, and then, after he had so often wilfully eclips'd this noble Dower, still to make new and more express Declara-

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rations of his Will. And the Doctrine of a future State is, as I apprehend, more unexceptionably deducible from those Historical Facts recorded in the Pentateuch, tho' it is no where laid down in express Terms, than it can be collected, even by the glorious Light of Reason itself. As to that Argument in Proof of a future State, which is founded in Man's being a rational, and as such, an accountable Creature, it is undoubtedly a very strong and convincing one with all thinking Men: And that Reason likewise, without any subsequent Revelation, is, of herself, well able to prove her own Immortality, and the absolute Necessity of some other State of Retribution, after the Close of this unequal and confused Scene, is what, I imagine, none, who ever thought well upon the Subject, can deny. But then, as there are some Men, who fancy that Man's being distinguished from Brutes, by the Faculty of Reason, might be merely accidental; others who maintain, that even Brutes are endow'd with this reasoning Faculty, as well as Man, upon which Account, any Arguments in Proof of a future State, founded in Man's rational Nature, will go but a little Way, tho' these Arguments be ever so strong in themselves, to convince either of these Sorts of Men. The first won't allow, that Man's being endow'd with a rational thinking Faculty, was at all the deliberate Effect of infinite Wisdom and Design, but merely

merely the accidental Result of blind Chance; and the last affirm, that this Proof of a future State, founded in Man's rational Principle, is equally a Proof that some Brutes, as well as Men, are included in the Argument; and, upon this Account, they tell us, if the Argument proves any thing, it proves too much. And further with regard to those Proofs of a future State, with which the unassisted Light of sound Reason, or Nature, do abundantly furnish us, these are such as don't equally fall within every Man's Comprehension. For tho' Reason, when rightly improved, and not hindered, by her rebellious Subjects the Passions, from doing her Duty, is almost an infallible Guide; yet that by far the greatest Numbers of the rational Species, are wilfully blind to this bright Lamp of Heaven, is a melancholy Truth not to be dissembled.

And when these Things are coolly debated, we shall then see the Necessity of having recourse to some other Arguments, than those borrowed from the Light of Nature, by which to convince the Bulk of Men, that they have an Interest in some future State of Existence. For it is not barely enough, that the Proofs of a future State are sufficient in themselves, but they ought likewise to be so adapted, as to be sufficient for the Conviction of the greater Numbers; and levelled to the Capacity of those, to whom such Proofs are address'd. But those Proofs of a future State, arising from
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the Consideration of Man's being endued with a thinking rational Principle, or even those Arguments which Man (by a due Exercise of this rational Principle) is well enabled to deduce from the present unequal Distribution of Things, these, I say, are such as, comparatively speaking, fall but under the Knowledge of few. And notwithstanding all serious, unprejudiced Inquirers, are abundantly convinced of the Certainty of a future State, by their own Reasonings and Deductions, yet it is found a very arduous Task to convince others; or so to state these Proofs of an after Existence, as to make the Bulk of Mankind see them in the same full and strong Point of Light as they appear to ourselves. Besides, be those Arguments of the Certainty of a future State drawn from the Light of Reason, ever so powerful, yet this perverse and ignorant Objection will eternally start up against them, that they are only Arguments of human Invention, or such only, as have no other Support, but that of fallible and short-sighted Reason. Nay, and notwithstanding the Doctrine of a future State, may be shewn (as without all Peradventure it may) to be founded in the very Nature of Things, and in the Justice of the Divine Being, yet, when these Arguments come from Man only, and have no other Authority to recommend them, but human Reason, they are, by a Set of ignorant People, utterly disregarded. And as some
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Men, overwhelm'd with human Pride, pay human Reason too superstitious an Adoration, being not content with examining Revelation by the Rules of Reason, unless they are allow'd to make Revelation give place to this proud Arbiter, there are on the other hand a Set of self-deluded Men, who run into the opposite Extreme, and won't give the least Credit to any Arguments drawn from this pure Fountain, Reason. This therefore, being the true State of Men, in their different Reasonings upon the very same Things, infinite Wisdom saw it necessary, for the Satisfaction and good of his Creatures, to give them, besides the Boon of Reason, an immediate Revelation from Heaven. For as the Arguments which Reason might suggest, would not be equal in all, or at least not equally improved, it pleased the Divine Goodness, to give to the World, certain written Institutes; and that Mankind might be under no sort of Doubt from whence these Eternal Precepts come, God condescended to deliver the most important of these sacred Truths from his own Divine Lip: And, in the most astonishing *Scenery* of Thunderings, Lightnings, and fearful Tremblings of the burning Mount, to reveal to the People that sacred *Digest* of the moral Law, which was eternally binding, not only upon the Jews, but upon the whole Race of Mankind. And therefore God, by leaving these important Truths upon Record to all after Ages,

Ages, has, in so doing, established the Authority of the moral Law beyond all impertinent Cavils and perverse Disputes of ignorant Men. For here those ignorant Men, who won't give Ear to the Voice of Reason, are constrain'd through Fear and Reverence of the Divine Being, to listen to that *Voice which spake out of the midst of the thick Darknes*, and made the everlasting Hills tremble. So that I apprehend, whatever Doctrines are manifestly deducible from the Law, as first revealed by God, and, at his Command recorded by *Moses*, will be more universally received, than such Doctrines as are indeed deducible by the Light of Nature, but are not so expressly divulged by immediate Revelation. This, I imagine, might be one chief Reason for superadding those revealed Truths to the Law of Nature, and shews at once the Absurdity of that Opinion so strenuously maintained by the late Doctor *Middleton*, (*viz.*) that revealed Religion was no more than a Republication of the Law of Nature: But to what little Purpose, such a Republication of the Law of Nature would answer, has been already hinted in a foregoing Section. If then we are able, by a close Examination of the Precepts or even of the Facts recorded in the Pentateuch, to deduce the Certainty of a future State, I apprehend nothing farther can be necessary to establish this most interesting Doctrine, than to shew that the Books of *Moses*

ses were actually revealed from Heaven, and that we now have this sacred Piece in the very same Form and Substance, as when it was first penn'd; which two interesting Points I shall endeavour to make out, in as clear, and short a Compass, as the Difficulty of the Subject will admit of. First, that the Law of *Moses* was revealed by God, the Doctrines themselves are the truest Test. And amongst these revealed Truths, the Doctrine of the Unity was chief in itself, as well as the first in the Decalogue. And after the Divine Being had expressed his Indignation at Idol Worship, he repeats, in the Course of his Precepts to *Moses*, this important Command, *Be ye holy*; and that this Command might have its proper Influence, God invites them to the Practice of Holiness, that they might, thereby, conform themselves to his own great and glorious Pattern: *Be ye Holy, for I the Lord your God am Holy*. Now from what Quarter could these Precepts, with the rest of the written moral Law, come, but from the great Fountain of all Purity and Wisdom? For that these were Truths well worthy a Being of infinite Wisdom and Holiness, the great Rewards and unspeakable Advantages arising to Mankind from an Observance thereof, sufficiently pronounce. These sacred Truths could not be divulged by any Evil Spirits or Demons, because, in this case, *Satan*, the Prince of Darkness, would have been divided against himself; And human Reason

Reason was, at that dark Period, too much eclipsed, to discover those important and eternal Truths. So that though these Truths of the moral Law, were discoverable by Reason, if that Reason had not been eclipsed, yet, since it was, 'twas God alone, who revealed them to *Moses*. And that we have this Divine Law in the very same Form and Substance, as when it was at first penned, is evident, in some Measure, from hence, that the Jews have ever been restrained by an extraordinary Interposition of Providence, from cancelling one single Precept, or so much as altering any one individual Verse throughout the whole Law.

And to make out this Assertion, let the Words of the great Christian Lawgiver be produced, *Verily I say unto you, Till Heaven and Earth pass, one Iota, or one Tittle, shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled.* When it is affirmed therefore by the Lip of Truth, that not so much as one single Letter or Point of the Law, should ever be cancelled, can the *Impartial Enquirer* suppose, that any fundamental Doctrines or important Predictions, have been preserved with less providential Regard, than such Passages as were, perhaps, only narrative, and, comparatively speaking, of very little Moment with Respect to the more essential Parts of the *moral* Law? And even supposing (which in Fact we cannot do) that Providence did not interpose

pose in the careful Preservation of its own written Law from any human Corruptions, still the Jews of the more early Ages, and through whose Hands the Oracles of God were carefully transmitted down to succeeding Generations, had such a religious Veneration for the Law, as to chuse to die a * hundred Deaths, before they would suffer the Law of God to be altered in any Respect: And whoever had the Impiety of so much as attempting to change, or obliterate any one Syllable of God's written Law, he was immediately pronounced guilty of an unpardonable Crime. Nay, and farther, so laudably zealous and watchful were the Jews over the Sacred Oracles, that whoever, either through Ignorance, Malice, or Self-Conceit, dared to alter one single Word in the sacred Book, was looked upon as a headstrong Wretch, and as dangerous an Enemy to the State, as if he were going about to overthrow the very Foundations of the Earth, and to hurl all the Works of Nature into its original Confusion. And indeed we need not wonder that the sober Jews of the more early Ages, had this commendable Zeal for the sacred Book,

* Scribit Philo in libro de egressu filiorum Israel ab Ægypto, usque ad sua tempora per spatium amplius quam duorum millium Annorum, ne verbum quidem fuisse unquam in lege Hebræorum mutatum, et quemlibet Judæum centies potius moriturum, quam ut pateretur, legem in aliquo mutari." This Passage is likewise, as *Glassius* takes Notice, cited by *Eusebius*, lib. 8. cap. 2. præpar. Evang. Vide *Salom. Glassii Philolog. Sacra.* p. 23.

Book, for as it was with them a Maxim that the World was created for the Law, and the Law made for the World, it seemed necessarily to follow, that whoever had the Presumption to change or obliterate any Part of that Law, he was endeavouring, as much as in him lay, to subvert the Works of Nature. And as the World is the present *great Theatre*, where God's Laws are revealed and explained to his Earthly Creatures, and for the Sake of whom, the World is yet preserved in Being, so the Man who corrupts the very least Part of the written Law, and teaches Men so, seems equally to offend both against the moral and natural System. For there is such a secret Kind of Connection between the two Worlds, the moral and the natural, that whoever wilfully subverts the Laws of one, must, in Time, shake and unhinge the Foundations of the other. And, to set this Observation in a familiar Point of Light, suppose a Man, in any single Family, were to break in upon all the Laws of Morality, would not that Wretch, in Time, overturn even the temporal Affairs of the House he lived in? And further, have not Gaming, Extravagance, and mad Profaneness, disparked the finest Woods, and thrown the most stately Piles of Building into hideous Ruins? How often have the most captivating rural Scenes of Grottos and Flow-ers, been made a Den for wild Beasts, by the Conduct of the impious and dissolute Owners?

ers? And if the immoral and abandoned Conduct of Particulars, introduces unavoidable Ruin, as far as the fatal Influence spreads, then it must follow, for the very same Reason, that as Profaneness and an open Contempt of God's Laws encrease, Disorder and strange Confusion must ensue, through the Works of Nature. And should we live (which God in Mercy forbid) to see the Laws of Morality universally despised and laughed at, nothing less, in the Nature of Things, could be expected, but Ruin and Confusion to a People so infatuated. And when these Hints are well weighed, I flatter myself that good Sense, Virtue, and sound Religion will again lift up their Heads and triumph: And that when Men are once convinced, that every Breach upon the Laws of the moral World, introduces Misery and Confusion into the natural System, they will then, first through Views of temporal Advantages, and in Time upon more noble Motives, become truly obedient to that *Divine Law*, which has Promises of this Life annexed, and also of the Life which is to come, as certainly, though not so expressly promised, as in the *second Covenant*. As therefore we have seen how close a Connection there is, for the most Part, between the Laws of the moral, and the regular Order of the natural World, then as we are desirous to prevent the final Ruin of the one, let us each of

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us, in our respective Stations, endeavour to amend, both by Example and Precept, the fatal Disorders of the other. For we may depend upon this fearful Truth, that whenever the Measure of the World's Iniquity is filled up, the very World itself will soon pass away. And it was this well grounded Opinion of the close Connection between the Preservation of the Law in its original Purity, and the Fate of the natural World, that made the antient Jews so laudably careful and zealous, for fear the Sacred Book should undergo the least Alteration, through ignorant or designing Men. This therefore, is even a Demonstration, that the Jews had no Inclination to alter one single Tittle of the Law.

And as a farther Proof that the Scriptures of *Moses* are now the very same as when they were first recorded, I will shew you, that supposing the Jews had any Inclination to corrupt and alter the Book of God's Laws, still it was not in their Power to do it: God's Wisdom and his Goodness, were too nearly interested, to suffer his own written Mandates to be cancelled, or corrupted. For if the Jews, either have, or could alter or obliterate any Part of the Law, they must have done it either before the coming of our Saviour or since. But that they had made no alterations in the Writings of *Moses*, or of the Prophets before our Lord's Appearance, is evident from our Saviour's own Testimony. Does not he

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appeal to the Authority of the Law, and prove his Divine Mission from that Book of the Law of *Moses*, which the Jews had so carefully preserved? *Had ye, says he, believed Moses, ye would have believed me, * for he wrote of me.* Now our Saviour would never have appealed to the Writings of *Moses*, had they been spurious or corrupted; or if the Jews had corrupted or obliterated any Words of the Law, it certainly would have been took notice of by our Saviour: But so far is he from taxing them with any such iniquitous Practices, that he plainly intimates the very Reverse: He bids his Followers observe and do every Thing which the Scribes and Pharisees Taught; and for this Reason, because they sat in *Moses's* Seat, that is, they were at that Time, the Lawful Expounders and Conservators of the Law; whereas if that written Law had, in our Saviour's Time, been at all corrupted or altered, he would most undoubtedly have detected the Matter. And amongst all the various Crimes of those vain Hypocritical Men, the Scribes and Pharisees, yet they are never once taxed with having altered the least Tittle in the Oracles of God. From hence therefore it is plain, that the sacred Writings of the Law and the Prophets were not altered before the coming of the Messiah: Neither has the Sacred Book of the Old Testament been altered in any one single Text, since

* St. John's Gospel, ch. v. 46.

since our Lord's Ascension. And it is thus we may fairly prove this Assertion, (*viz.*) that if the Jews had corrupted any Part of the Bible, they would have done it in such Passages, as so exactly foretold the very Time, the Place, and the miraculous Birth of the promised Messiah, with almost every other memorable Event, relating to the great Ransom of the World. For as these various Predictions, so punctually describe the Coming, Office and Person of the promised Redeemer, the Jews were rendered quite inexcusable for rejecting the Messiah, in whom they saw every Prediction relating to his Appearance so eminently fulfilled. And as the unbelieving Jews are self-condemned, for denying *Jesus* to be that great *Shiloh* that all their Patriarchs and Prophets did say, *should come into the World*, little Doubt can be made, but that if the Jews had expunged or corrupted any Part of the Divine Code, they would have done it in such Passages, as, at this *very Day*, rise up in Evidence against them, and render their perverse Denial of the Messiah, quite unpardonable. If therefore the Law was not altered, neither before, nor since the coming of him, who was the great Fulfiller of it, then it is plain, we have it now in the same full Substance and exact Form, as when it was first delivered by the Voice of Revelation. Not that it is here supposed that every indi-

vidual Copy of the Bible was, in every Age, entirely free from Errors and Mistakes, this is by no Means credible ; and it is very probable, that many various Readings, (not to say false Ones) would creep into some Copies of the Law : For what through the Punctuations of the Hebrew Vowels, the various Accents, the Transposition of Letters, and different Construction of Words, (not to mention the Hurry and Neglect of ignorant Transcribers of the Law) it cannot be reasonably imagined that every Copy of the *Sacred Book* should be quite free from the least Mistake. But then, notwithstanding some Copies of the Bible might, for the Reasons now mentioned, be defective, or corrupted, yet there were always several faithful Transcripts of the *Hebrew* Covenant ; and from the first Promulgation of the Mosaic Law, to the Christian Æra, this *Divine Original*, (by an adorable Providence) was preserved in the same original Purity, as when first it was penned by the Jewish Legislator upon the Holy Mount : Nay, these sacred Transcripts were, in reality, nothing less than the great Original multiplied, and, from Time to Time, transmitted from one faithful Conservator to another, with the most religious Care. Nor does the Number of spurious, corrupted Copies, any more invalidate the Authenticity of those pure Oracles of God, than a modern Italian Version
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of the New Testament, affects the genuine Doctrines, and primitive Truths of the Gospel. But it will very likely be objected, that it would be no easy Matter to distinguish the genuine Transcripts of the Divine Law, from the spurious Copies, because the Abettors of these, were all alike confident theirs was the true Ones; be it so; for Error is generally pretty sanguine and positive: But as Truth is always uniform and consistent, so I apprehend those Transcripts of the sacred Oracles, which in all Ages remained nearly the same, bid the fairest to be true; and that our Book of the Divine Law, as we now have it, is one of those pure, genuine Transcripts, has been proved, by comparing it with that infallible Criterion, the Masoretic Criticisms; for with such providential Regard did the Almighty preserve his own written Mandates from human Corruptions, that he stirred up the Hearts of those venerable Critics of the Divine Law, the Men of the great Synagogue or sacred Consistory; that by their stupendous Labours, it might not only be purged of those Errors that had crept in, during those miserable Distractions of the Jews before, and under the Captivity, but fenced and guarded from all human Errors and Corruptions to the End of the World. Nay, so incredible was the Industry of those sacred Guardians of the Book of God, that they counted not only the Verses

and Words, but every individual Letter of the inspired Writings. *

And the Inference I would draw from the Authenticity of this Divine Law, which, by the adorable Wisdom of God, has been preserved for so many Ages, uncorrupted, though almost all the while in Enemies Hands, is this, that whatever is fairly *deducible* from this sacred Book, is, and cannot be otherwise than strictly true. And I defy the whole Herd of Infidels (numerous as it is) to evade the Force of these Proofs, that the Law was actually revealed by God, and is at this very Day preserved

* “ Est autem Masora doctrina critica, a priscis Hebræorum sapientibus, circa textum Hebræum sacra Scripturæ, ingeniose inventa, qua Versus, Voces & Literæ ejus numerata, omnisque ipsorum varietas Notata, & suis locis cum singulorum Versuum, recitatione indicata est, ut sic constans & genuina ejus lectio conservetur, & ab omni mutatione aut corruptione æternum preservetur & valide præmuniatur.” These Remarks *Glassius* borrows from *Buxtorf*. See his *Philo. Sac.* pag. 27. And *Fuller* confirms this Account of the unwearied Industry of those zealous and faithful Conservators of the Divine Law. ---“ Excogitata est a peritissimis Judæorum Magistris, subtilis quædam ars & curiosa, quam Masoreth dixerunt, hoc est, traditionem, vel rationem accuratissimam tradendi per Manus Posterorum Scripturæ sanctæ Canonem purum semper integrumque. Cujus beneficio non Vocabula duntaxat, sed ipsas etiam literas in numero habent: Adeo ut nulla ne minima quidem mutatio inveni queat, ab hominibus aut indoctis, aut oscitantibus, aut temerariis, quin e vestigio facile deprehendatur.” And upon this Account, *Fuller* takes Notice, that the Masoretic Criticism justly deserved to be called the great Fence and Barrier of (*Sepes Legis*) the Divine Law. *Vide Full. Miscell. Sacra, lib. iii. cap. 13.*

served the same as when first divulged. And I am the bolder in this Defiance, because I know I have Truth for my Support, which by its own irresistible Power and Greatness, must, in this Case at least, ever prevail; but Infidelity has no other Foundation than Falsehood, Ignorance or Malice. As therefore it is evident, that whatever Doctrines are fairly deducible from the Pentateuch, must be as true, as that incontestible Authority from whence they may be proved, so I think the Doctrine of a future State is one, and the most important one too, though not so expressly delivered as in after Ages. And notwithstanding it has been asserted by a Writer whose Learning and Acuteness demand Esteem, that the Omission of a Future State in the Law of *Moses*, is a Proof of his Divine Legation, yet it does not follow that the Doctrine of a future State, though not expressly revealed in the Law, is not, for that Reason, deducible from thence; and more especially from the Behaviour of the Israelites under the Theocracy, which rendered the open Revelation of a Future State less necessary. For if Rewards and Punishments, when distributed by the visible Hand of God could not keep the Israelites in any tolerable Obedience to the Laws of Heaven, does it not necessarily follow, that no temporary Expedients are of Weight enough to restrain some Men from Impiety? And, does not this Inexpediency

ency of temporary Rewards and Punishments, make future eternal Ones absolutely necessary? For notwithstanding God was visibly supreme over Israel, and condescended to conduct all the Affairs of his People, both in Church and State, rewarding their Obedience with singular Notices of miraculous Bounties, and executing immediate Vengeance upon Disobedience, by often cutting off Thousands at one vindictive Stroke: Yet this answered to no one settled Purpose, the People soon rebelled again, and God again was forced, in Vindication of his own Government, to cut them off by immediate Death. And had God continued his People under a Theocracy much longer, there would scarce have been ten Men left to have taken Possession of the promised Land. There were few that had even common Sense enough, to serve God for the Sake of their own Interest; fewer that had the Ingenuity to serve the Divine Being upon the noble Principles of Gratitude and Love; and, upon this Account, the Bulk of the People was no other ways to be restrained from repeated Rebellion against God, than by immediate Punishment: And that Punishment could be nothing less than Death; for as to any other Stroke of Divine Wrath, which did not cut the Sinner utterly off, he still sinned again the Moment the Blow ceased. But this Method would, in a little Time, have brought on the total Annihilation of that perverse

verse People, and therefore, it was an Act of Mercy in the Divine Being, to withdraw from amongst them. And if this Inexpediency of temporary Rewards and Punishments, while God himself was visibly supreme, and directed every Thing by his own irresistible Arm; if this Account of the Theocracy seems in the least to call the Divine Proceedure in Question, my Answer is this, That the Inefficacy of those Rewards and Punishments under the Theocracy, was owing very manifestly, to the Insufficiency and Weakness of every *temporary* Expedient upon a perverse and impious Race of Men, but is by no Means chargeable upon the Divine Being. And I am firmly of Opinion, that infinite Wisdom, by exhibiting such a Form of Government, and causing the History thereof to be recorded, did it, to convince all After-Ages, that there are some People of such irreclaimable Tempers, that Omnipotence itself cannot keep them from repeated Impiety, without either depriving them of free Agency, or striking them dead: In the first of these Cases, a Man would be no better than a Brute; and in the second, there would soon not be a Man left. So that a fuller Proof of the Necessity of a future State, cannot be produced, than what may be fairly drawn from a serious Review of that Form of Government, where God was visibly supreme. And amongst other wise Reasons (known to God only) why the Doctrine

trine of a future State did not expressly make a Part of the written Law, this, perhaps, might be one, that, by this very Omission, and the Behaviour of the Bulk of Men in Consequence thereof, all after Ages might see, that where this Doctrine of a Future State is not openly taught, and *believed too*, as well as taught, Men are not to be restrained from the most shocking Impieties, though an angry God is visibly amongst them, and giving, every Day, some new Display, both of his Mercy and his Vengeance. And though the Omission of *this Doctrine*, in the written Institutes of *Moses*, may be a full Proof of his Divine Embassy, and of the absolute Necessity of God's visible and miraculous Interposition, in Order to keep a People, who had neither future Hopes nor Fears, in any Sort of Subjection, yet, as I humbly apprehend, it would have been a less arduous Undertaking, and a much shorter Method with the Deists and Infidels of the Age, to convince them of the Divine Mission of *Moses*, by appealing to the * mighty Works, which *Moses* the Servant of God, publickly wrought before Thousands of Men, and Men too of different Interests. For if it can (as without Doubt it may) be proved,

* This was the very Argument that one greater than *Moses* made use of, to prove his own Divine Mission; and desired no other Test of his Messiahship, than those mighty Works which were done by him. See St. John's Gospel, chap. x. 38. xiv. 11.

proved, that *Moses* wrought all those astonishing Wonders at the Command, and by the Assistance of Heaven; and that we have at this Day, a true and faithful History of the Miracles of *Moses*, what farther Proof of his Embassy, can any sober Deist expect or wish? And in my own private Opinion, it is an Argument that falls more naturally under the Comprehension of the Bulk of Readers, to prove the Divine Legation of *Moses*, from what he has done and said, rather than from what he has omitted, and not said: But this is nothing to my present Design, which was to shew, that the Doctrine of a Future State is manifestly deducible from the Mosaic History: And as this Part of my Enquiry is come pretty near to a Conclusion, I shall only beg of the Reader to give me Leave before I shut up the *Horeb* Law, to present him with a Particular or two relating to the Jewish Law-giver.

God tells *Moses*, that he was not to go into the Land of Promise, on Account of his Presumption at the Waters of *Meribah* * ;
yet

* Were I allowed to conjecture about this *Offence* at the Waters of *Meribah* in *Kadesh*, *Moses* and *Aaron*, I should think, seem to distrust both God's *Power*, and his *Goodness*; as if the Almighty was neither disposed nor able to bring Water out of such a dead, dry Rock, and merely for the Use of such murmuring and discontented Rebels: *Hear now, ye Rebels, must we fetch you Water out of this Rock?* was the Speech upon this Occasion. And that this betrayed a Distrust in the mighty God of Jacob,

yet nevertheless God assures him (*Deut. XXXI. 16.*) *that he should sleep with his Fathers:* Which Expression, cannot, I should think, relate to the utter Extinction of *Moses*: For, if *Moses* was not to exist in some future happy Mansion, he had much harder Fate than many others. For we find he was not permitted to enter into the Land of Promise; and it would seem a little severe upon this meekest of Men, both to be judicially excluded from the Land of present Bliss, and to be utterly deprived of all future Hopes. Were this the deplorable State of this Man of God, had he not

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well as an uncharitable, vindictive Disposition, the inspired Commentator upon the Passage before us, is very express, declaring, that *Moses* in this Affair *spoke unwisely with his Lips: Distinxit in Labiis suis: Aliter protulit Verba Dei quam proferenda erant.* The Jewish Legislator seems to equivocate, and to play upon Words; he addresses himself to the People in Language of Reproach to them, and of Doubt with Respect to God's Power.---*Ye Rebels, shall we fetch you Water out of this Rock?* Whereas his Commission being absolute, and to address himself, not to the People, but to the Rock, (See *Numb. xx. 8.*) he upon that Account, should have executed his Commission in the same absolute Terms as God gave it; and instead of upbraiding the People, commanded the dead Stone to give its Water; *Petra da aquas.* This Offence of the Jewish Legislator, might, considering the Treatment he met with from that perverse People, have been more easily overlooked at any other Period, but *that, in which* Rewards and Punishments were not only temporal, but for the most Part instantaneously distributed: But under the Theocracy, this Offence of *Moses* and *Aaron* (let it be what it would) could not be overlooked, unless God had given up his own Plan of Government.

a Thousand Times better have staid in *Egypt* at the first ? For as he was the *adopted* Son of *Pharaoh's* Daughter, he was Heir apparent of that most powerful Monarchy. He had the golden Hopes of one Day mounting upon *Pharaoh's* Throne ; he had all the dazzling Splendor of a Crown in full View, and might promise himself every soft Pleasure, and soothing Gratification of Power and Dominion. He was, while in his Mother's Court, every where surrounded with those Kind of Charms which, to a youthful Mind, are irresistibly bewitching. Upon what Account therefore, did *Moses* abandon all these captivating Delights, to wander in a solitary Desert amongst a Set of murmuring Sinners, who were often ready to stone him ? Why (I say) did *Moses* chuse this, if he had no better Hopes than those of this present Life ? But depend upon it, *Moses* had Views of a much higher Nature ; he had far more exalted Pleasures in *Reversion*, than all that the Kingdom of *Egypt* could have administered. And what those Pleasures were, which *Moses* preferred to the Delights of a Crown, let the following Account speak ; and as these inspired Words are so fine an Encomium upon the great Jewish Lawgiver, let them be applied as his Funeral Oration, and the Close of his History : By † *Faith*, *Moses*, when he was born, was hid three Months of his Parents, because they saw he was a proper Child, and they

† Heb. xi. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27.

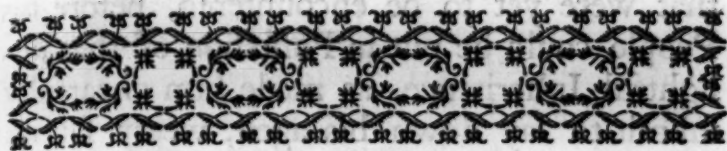
they were not afraid of the King's Commandment. By Faith, Moses, when he was come to Years, refused to be called the Son of Pharaoh's Daughter, chusing rather to suffer Affliction with the People of God, than to enjoy the Pleasures of Sin for a Season: Esteeming the Reproach of Christ, greater Riches than the Treasures of Egypt; for he had Respect unto the Recompence of the Reward. By Faith, he forsook Egypt, not fearing the Wrath of the King: For he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible.

Therefore to the immortal, invisible *Jebo-
vab*, the only Lord God, be evermore as-
cribed all Honour, Praise, Majesty and Do-
minion, throughout all Ages of the World.
Amen.

The End of the SECOND BOOK.



BOOK



B O O K III.

S E C T. I.

THE Reader having been detained in the Deserts of *Arabia*, perhaps longer than may be agreeable, considering the refractory Company in that uncouth Journey, I will now, by God's Permission, introduce him into that Land of Promise, to which the Children of *Israel* at last arrived.

The Scene of my last Subject was the *Mount of Nebo*, from whence *Moses*, by the Eyes of a strong prophetick Sight, was enabled to view the Land of Promise: Nor did this Prospect, as I take it, relate merely to the Situation and Beauties of that delightful Country, but to those many great and astonishing Events, of which the Land that *Moses* beheld from the Top of *Nebo*, was to be the future Scene.

And as this prophetick View of the many great Events in the Holy Land, was a distinguished Favour to *Moses*, so at the same Time

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it gave him such a Prospect of the Difficulties that were yet to be encountered, before his People could be put in Possession of that delightful Inheritance, as made him chearfully submit to lay down his aged, weary Limbs upon the Top of *Pisgab*. *Moses* had already found, from a Thousand repeated Miracles, that the People which he had brought out of *Ægypt* were rebellious to the Laws of God's Glory, under a visible Appearance, encamped around them. And as little Doubt can be made, but this great Prophet of Heaven was apprized that God would not for wise Reasons, vouchsafe, much longer, to govern and awe that perverse People, by any visible Display of his glorious Effulgence; so he could not but foresee how impossible it would be to keep that People under any tolerable Reverence to God's Laws, when that visible Display and particular Interposition of the Almighty were to be withdrawn. For if some perverse Minds could not be prevented from Rebellion in Church and State, when God was visibly supreme in both, how far more arduous would the Task be, to manage the People under any other Form of Government, since all others, compared to a Theocracy, must be very defective? And if it should be demanded for what Ends God condescended to reside visibly for Forty Years amongst his People, and then to withdraw the bright Effulgence of his Glory, it might (were it not too dangerous,

dangerous, not to say ridiculous, to typify upon every Occasion) be replied, that this *Quadrennial* Theocracy, where God's Glory visibly resided amongst the People, was an *Emblem* of our glorious Redeemer's Forty Years Appearance upon Earth. For this Display of the Deity for Forty Years, may, I think, be as true an Emblem of our Saviour's Residence upon Earth for that Space of Time, as the Forty Days Fasting of *Moses* can be a Type of our Lord's Fasting the same Number of Days.

And farther, should Curiosity prompt us to demand, for what Purpose was it for God to reside, in that visible glorious Manner among the Israelites, seeing the People were nevertheless so outrageously rebellious under the Theocracy? Let it be replied, that, amongst other wise and great Reasons of God's taking the Government of both Church and State into his own Hands, this might be one, to make an *eminent* Trial * upon Human Nature

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* Left the Words Trial and Experiment, which so frequently occur in this Treatise, should give any Offence to the delicate Reader, let him please to observe, that wherever the Divine Being is introduced as making Trials or Experiments upon Human Nature, it is, and can be no otherwise understood, than what we call *Quoad ad Homines*; that this *Series* of Experiments might be, to the Men upon whom they were mercifully made, as so many various *Calls* to Amendment, and withal to convince both them and all who should in succeeding Ages duly consider the *Sacred History*, that nothing could possibly

ture, in order to convince his Creatures, that if any amongst them should be so perversely infatuated, as not to be kept in Subjection to God's Laws, when God was visibly amongst them, all other temporary Expedients would be to no Purpose. And therefore the Divine Being, by exhibiting that Form of Government, and leaving upon Record the Rebellion of the People under God's immediate Direction, has, even experimentally proved (had it not been revealed) the absolute Necessity of future eternal Torments. For, from a due Attention to the Behaviours of Human Nature under the immediate Eye of God, it appears very evident, that there have been some Men not to be reclaimed from Sin by any *finite* Exped-

bly have been done to the Terrestrial Vineyard, that had not been done in it. These repeated Trials were made to be as so many *demonstrative Proofs* of the Inefficacy of any *finite* Expedients, and thereby afford such an eminent *Vindication* of the Divine Economy, in having Recourse at last to the *Tremendous Sanction*, as to strike the *Objects* of it dumb with Self-Conviction, and bitter Remorse of Conscience, for having forced offended *Justice* to inflict a Punishment, which, though dreadful even in Thought, those unhappy People, whose sad Lot it may be, will acknowledge to be as just on God's Part, as well-deserved on theirs. And to suppose that the Almighty made these manifold Trials upon the Human Species, either as an *arbitrary* Exercise of Dominion, or out of mere Curiosity, to suppose, I say, that Omniscience, that HE, who from Eternity knew how all his Creatures would demean themselves, did it upon his own Account, or for any other Reasons, than for the Sake of his Earthly *Probationers*, would be very unphilosophical, not to say very impious.

Expedients : The Truth whereof will more fully appear, when we come to survey the Behaviour of the Israelites under the next Form of Government which succeeded the Theocracy.

The Israelites Form of Government, after the Death of *Josua*, was an Aristocracy, a Kind of Commonwealth, at the Head of which, those that judged Israel for the Time being, sat to hear and give Judgment, both in Religious and Civil Affairs. Under this Model of Government the Israelites lived about Two Hundred and Thirty-nine Years, and during that Period they had Thirteen Judges from *Othniel* to good old *Eli*, reckoned inclusively : † For though *Sampson* was the last of the Judges in the Book which bears that Title, yet *Eli* succeeded *Sampson*, and judged Israel Forty Years, as we learn from 1 *Sam.* IV. 18. To *Eli*, *Samuel* succeeded ; but I do not reckon him in the above List of Judges, because in his Days, the Government was partly divided between *Saul*, the first King of the Hebrews, and *Samuel* the Prophet of the Lord. This then being observed, it may not be improper to inquire into the Office, Power and Election of the ancient Hebrew Judges, and having done this, I will take a short Survey of the Behaviour of the Israelites under that original Aristocracy. As to the Office of these Judges, it consisted

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† Vide *Lib. Judic.*

in advising the People in all Publick Affairs, whether Civil or Religious: The Judge for the Time being, heard and determined all Causes brought before him; and he was not only (as it were) Grand Council to the Nation in all Religious and Civil Affairs in Time of Peace, but he also, in Time of War, went into the Field, and led forth their Armies in the Day of Battle. It was the Office of this Great Magistrate to enquire at the Mouth of the Lord in all *weighty* Matters, and in every Disaster of State. And the Hebrew Judges were likewise, many of them, Prophets, being distinguished from others by the Gift of Inspiration. They were frequently honoured by Divine Visions, and the Visits of heavenly Messengers. God himself often spake to the Judges, directing them what to do in all sudden Emergencies of State; encouraging them to be bold and courageous in driving out, and subduing their idolatrous Enemies; assuring them of his Presence and Protection in all calamitous Circumstances.

And notwithstanding the Divine Being did not talk with these *venerable Worthies*, Mouth to Mouth, as he had formerly done to his Servant *Moses*, nor appeared to them in that *visible* Display of Glory, as he did when he was immediate *Supreme*, yet God was pleased to send to these Judges of his People, repeated Messengers from Heaven; and, by his Holy Angels, to signify his Pleasure in all
Matters

Matters of Moment ; thereby assuring them of his particular Interposition and Favour, under all their public Undertakings for the Good of the People. And with Regard to the Power and Authority of the Judges, this was neither so great, nor so extensive as the future Regal Dominion. The Judges could neither enact new Laws *, nor by their own Power set aside old ones : They could neither levy Taxes upon the People nor force them to submit to their Counsels. And notwithstanding their Admonitions were held very sacred by all *serious* Men, yet as to those who were perverse and rebellious, the Judges were not invested with sufficient Authority to compel such Men to Obedience, nor to punish them for their Wickedness and Rebellion. For that the Power of the Judges was not equal to the Regal Authority, is plain from several Passages in the Book bearing that Title : For when speaking of the Wickedness and Idolatry of the People, it is often attributed to a Want of Power invested in the Judges, whereby they might (by inflicting Capital and other Punishments, as Kings afterwards did) keep the People under proper Subjection. Thus it is said, chap. XVII. v. 6. *And it*

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* *Judices enim nec novam legem condere poterant (nam secundum leges Dei Rempublicam administrabant, et in rebus gravioribus Synedrii decretis alligabantur) nec tributa populo imponere, uti possunt Reges. Cor. a Lapide.*

came to pass in those Days, that there was no King in Israel, but every Man did what was right in his own Eyes. This Observation, of there being no King in Israel, is several Times repeated in the History of the Hebrew Judges: And the inspired Writer gives this Want of Regal Power to punish Offenders, as the Cause of Wickedness and Idolatry spreading so fatally amongst the Israelites. For as the Judges of Israel had not Power to restrain Men from Vice, nor to punish State Delinquents, all that those Holy Men could do, was only to admonish the unthinking People to forsake their Abominations, and return in Time to that gracious God who had so often delivered them out of the Hands of their Enemies. But we may find from the History of the Judges, that the most earnest Entreaties, and the most loving Calls to Repentance, are all lost upon hardened and perverse Minds. As to the Election of these Magistrates, the Judges of Israel, these venerable Worthies, were chosen into their high Office, by the immediate Appointment of Heaven: Upon the Death of these Men, their high Office being for Life, a Successor was raised up by the particular Direction (*Jephthah* excepted) of God. For, either by an immediate Impulse from Heaven, as in the Case of *Othniel**, the first Judge, or by the Message of an Angel, as in the Case of *Gideon*† and *Sampson*,

* See Judges iii. 10. † Judges vi. 11. xiii. 3.

son, God was pleased to raise up a Judge to be the *human Instrument* of rescuing the People from the Hand of their Enemies. Thus much therefore with Regard to the Office, Power, and Election of the Hebrew Judges.

I am next to take a short View of the Israelites under the Administration of these venerable Rulers. And as we are now, by God's Permission, got out of the *wide, howling Wilderness* into the Land of Promise, one might reasonably expect an End of those Enormities, by which the Israelites so often provoked God in the Desert: But the longer we attend the Conduct of this People, the more Reason we find not only to blame their Obstinacy, but to deplore the Perverseness of Human Nature in general. For though this *Prospect* is confined at present to the Behaviour of the Jews only, yet it is greatly to be feared we are all too nearly concerned; and that if we carefully look into the *Glass* before us, we may discover many Features that exactly resemble the present Generation *. A

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* This I mention, in Order to alarm my dear Fellow Christians; and to prevail with them carefully to compare the Jewish History with the Annals of *Christendom*, by which they will find the boasted Infidelity of Christians, equal to the stubborn Perverseness of the Jews. And if this be the Case, our Crime will be still greater than the Jews, forasmuch as we have not only their History written for our *Admonition*, but in this very *People* so many living Monuments of God's dreadful Vengeance upon an incorrigible Nation.

perverse Mind is the same in all Ages, and in all Climates; and modern Infidelity wherever it dwells, is as difficult to subdue, as Jewish Perverseness. But however, my Subject relating at present to the Conduct of one single Nation (in whose Conduct however, most other Nations may read their own History) let us turn our Eyes upon the Israelites in the Land of Promise. No sooner were *Joshua* and *Eleazar*, with the rest of their Contemporaries dead, but the Israelites either forgot or disregarded all the mighty Wonders wrought principally for their Sakes, and notwithstanding they had all along been most severely charged, when they should come to the Land of the Heathen Nations, not to *bow down to their Gods, or to make Mention of their Names*, yet they rush at once into all Manner of idolatrous Practices, and tempt God to punish them, by putting them under the Subjection of those very Nations, whom they were to have expelled out of the Land. There is scarce a Chapter in the Book of Judges, but what is filled with Accounts of the Impieties of that stubborn People: And in the Compass of two or three Centuries, we find Idolatry not the Practice of particular Families only, but it even became the National Worship, ten several Times *. And so deeply were those unhappy Men sunk in Ignorance and Superstition, as to conspire the Life of *Gideon*, one of

* Lege Librum Judicum.

of their Judges, for throwing down the Altar of *Baal*. This they would have done, had it not been for the prudent Reply of *Joash*, *Gideon's* Father : *And Joash said unto all that stood against him, Will ye plead for Baal? Will ye save him? He that will plead for Baal let him be put to Death whilst it is yet Morning; if he be a God, he will plead for himself* *. Well and prudently spoken; for if *Gideon* had offended in throwing down that Idol Statue, it was his Godship *Baal* that had received the rude Affront, and was at Liberty to avenge himself upon *Gideon* if he could; but that stupid Log was so far from being able to be avenged upon *Gideon*, that it could not move or stir from its own Place, without the Assistance of those very Men, who, through mad and devilish Infatuation, still paid him Divine Honours. It was this monstrous Perverseness of the Children of Israel, that tempted God, in spite of all Pity to his People, to sell them into the Hands of all that were round about them: There was no other Way to keep that stiff-necked People in any tolerable Subjection, but by Adversity and Afflictions. Prosperity they could not bear, and whenever they were at Ease, and free from the Calamities which their own Sins and Follies pulled down upon them, they forthwith repeated the same Crimes, and again challenged Divine Justice to punish their Madness and Impiety. While the Stroke of Vengeance lay upon them, then, and *then* only,

* Judges, vi.

Only, they began to think: *When in Distress they thought upon God, and cried out to the Rock of their Salvation.* And such was God's Compassion to his People, that notwithstanding their enormous Guilt, for so often repeating those very Crimes, for which they had been as often remarkably punished, yet whenever that People cried out unto the Lord, he as constantly delivered them out of their Distress. And whoever attentively reads the Book of Judges, will find it a Series of Crimes committed, and Punishments inflicted: While the Punishments were continued, Repentance on the People's Part, and ready Pardon on God's; who, whenever they were in Distress and cried unto him, had Compassion upon their Misery (though the Effect of their own Follies) and raised them up Judges, and then the Lord was with the Judges, and delivered them out of the Hand of their Enemies, all the Days of the Judge. But behold the unconquerable Impiety of all perverse Minds! For it is thus recorded, Judges II. 19. *And it came to pass when the Judge was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their Fathers, in following other Gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them. They ceased not from their own Doings, nor from their stubborn Way.* This Conduct of the Israelites provoked God to that Degree as to refuse to listen (as usual, to the first crying out of his People: *Wherefore (says God) I* will

will deliver you no more: Go and cry unto the Gods which ye have chosen, let them deliver you in the Time of your Tribulation *. But when the People, in deep Distress, repeated their Applications for Mercy, when they put away the strange Gods from among them, and served the Lord, begging of God to deliver them *only that once*; his Soul is said to be *grieved for the Misery of Israel*, and he did, in great Mercy, deliver them again by the Hand of *Jephthah*.

But yet for all this, how soon did the Israelites forget their own History, and the many dreadful Calamities which they had called down upon themselves, in Spite of God's great Love and Tenderness for his People? For if we read on a little further, we meet all along with the same black Account in these, or the like Words, *The Children of Israel did Evil again in the Sight of the Lord*: This is the constant Burden of the Jewish History; and God must either first punish, and then pardon them, to the End of Time, or else utterly destroy them from off the Face of the Earth, neither of which Methods are consistent with the Wisdom and Justice of the Divine Being. What then must Providence do with such incorrigible Tempers? Temporal Punishments are despised as soon as over; and as to the Rewards of Virtue and Obedience in this present Life, these are Sanctions too weak with the Bulk of Mankind. And if neither the Re-

* Judges x. 13, 14.

wards

wards nor the Punishments of the present Life can reclaim some hardened Wretches, does not the Doctrine of future Rewards and Punishments become necessary? and these Punishments must be something more than finite: For those incorrigible Sinners who cannot be reclaimed by the greatest temporal Punishment, but sin and rebel against God the very Moment the Punishments are removed, and descend to the Grave under this unrepented Guilt, would, if their future Misery was once respited, offend again, and perhaps become more atrociously profane. For though Death, and the Horrors of Eternity, cannot but awaken the Sinner's Conscience, and alarm his Fears, yet it is very doubtful whether any true Change is made in the Heart of such a Man as plunges into Eternity under boasted Profaneness and unrepented Impiety.

I shall just observe one Thing more with

Regard to the Conduct of the Israelites, under the Administration of the Judges, (*viz.*) That *every Man did what was right in his own Eyes*. This is another Trial upon human Nature, that After-Ages might see how strangely Mankind would act, if not under some prudent Restraints of good and wise Government. And the Almighty seems, for the universal Good of all succeeding Generations, designedly to have left in the Jewish Story, a Model and Plan of all Kinds of Government:

vernment: Nay, and even so far to indulge human Nature as to suffer every Man to be, as it were, a *King* to himself. But the strange Confusion of such wild Anarchy and Misrule, may be easily imagined: For when Men are not only left at liberty to do what they *think* is right, but imagine that whatever they do *must* be so, in this Case there would be as many Opinions in Religion as Men; all Order in Church and State would be utterly subverted, and this present Life would be a Thousand Times more miserable than it is. But praised be the Wisdom of God, this wild Rule of Judging and Acting every Man for himself, is now, by the written Law of God, utterly set aside. The Bible is the golden Rule of Faith, Opinion, and Practice for us all; and thrice happy would it be for us all, if we would be pleased to follow this sacred *infallible* Directory, instead of corrupting it with so many *absurd*, not to say impious Inventions of our own.

S E C T. II.

THE further we trace the *Jewish Story*, the Degeneracy of human Nature appears in a Light still more and *more* disadvantageous: And so discontented a Creature is Man; in his present State, that nothing will gratify his unreasonable Expectations, nor still the clamorous *Demands* of his encroaching Appetites:

petites: Man is consistent with himself in nothing but Murmurings and Complaints: When the pretended Cause of one Complaint is removed, another, in *Imagination* still greater, rises up in its stead. For notwithstanding the People of *Israel* had been indulged, by a merciful Providence, in every Thing they could wish, yet they soon grew tired of the greatest Blessings: They were neither to be reclaimed by present Rewards, nor by *temporary* Punishments: One, when become common by a long Enjoyment they held cheap, and whenever the other were removed, they hardened themselves more and more. This Conduct of human Nature abundantly testifies, that as there is in the Soul of Man a vast unbounded Principle, which is not to be satisfied with any worldly Enjoyments, or the greatest created Good, so there is likewise an inveterate Stubbornness in the Heart of some Men (though I hope in God the Number is not so great as is generally imagined) that will not be cured, or removed by the greatest Punishments, any longer than those Punishments are repeated. And the more severely we examine the History of the *Jews*, (a History which by change of *Title* will very well suit most other Nations) the more visibly will this melancholly Truth appear.

During that Twenty Years, that the Administration of publick Affairs was in the Hands of *Samuel*, the People demeaned themselves

selves tolerably well: This good Man, by his own prudent Advice, countenanced by the Blessing and Assistance of Heaven, prevailed with them to purge their Houses of Idols, to cast away their strange Gods, and to present themselves before the Lord at *Mispeh*, * in deep Humiliation and Repentance. And when the *Philistines* gathered themselves together against *Israel*, this Holy Man prayed ardently unto God for his Aid and Protection in the Day of Battle; which he was pleased to vouchsafe, and, even before *Samuel* had made an End of offering up the burnt Offerings, and pouring out his Supplications for the People, God, in fearful Display of Lightning and hot Thunder-bolts showered down upon the *Philistines*, utterly subdued them before the Children of *Israel*. The most Halcyon Days then which the Israelites had hitherto enjoyed, seem to have been during the Time of *Samuel's* Administration: But how soon they grew giddy with Prosperity, and what ungenerous Returns they made to *Samuel*, for his Life and Strength wholly laid out for the Interest of that ungrateful Race of Men, let these Words testify; † *Nay, but a King shall reign over us: That we also may be like all the Nations, and that our King may judge us, and go out before us and fight our Battles.* Here then let it be observed how greatly the People were culpable for making this fierce Demand without

* 1 Sam. vii. 6.

† See 1 Sam. chap. viii.

without the Direction of God, nay, and even in Opposition to Heaven, or at least in a mean and cowardly Distrust of God's future Protection and Assistance. And this alone, were there no other aggravating Circumstances, made the Demand of a King, (at that particular Juncture) both foolish and sinful: For as the *then Plan* of the Jewish Government, was a Divine Republick, over which God was the supreme Head, so for the People, of their own Accord, to want to introduce a Change in Government, was an immediate Affront to God, and driving the Almighty out of his own Commonwealth.

This ungrateful People, by wanting a King to reign over them, to judge their Causes, and fight their Battles, act as if they had forgotten who it was that had all along *raised them up Judges*, and made them so often victorious in Time of War. For could a King give just Judgment in Time of Peace, or head their Armies with Success in the Day of Battle, unless God was with him, as he declared he would be, (and even by many eminent Facts he appears to have been) with the Judges of *Israel*? So that the People, by this unreasonable Demand, want to shut God out of his own Republick, and to be like the idolatrous Nations round about them. And it is this very Circumstance which renders the Demand of a King both sinful and ridiculous: For *Is-*

rael had a Thousand Times been cautioned, not to imitate those idolatrous Nations, but most religiously to avoid all their Manners and Customs, and to be a *separate* and distinct People from all that were round about them. Neither had the *Jews* that *Plea, or Necessity* for a King to reign over them, as the Nations had: *Israel* was yet under God's immediate Government and Protection, though he did not, as in the Theocracy, visibly shew his Arm, and interpose upon all extraordinary Occasions: But *Jacob's* GOD himself was *Jacob's* KING: And for the People, under such Circumstances, to want another King, was preferring Man to God, and confiding more in human Power than in the Divine Protection: Whereas *the Nations* had deprived themselves of the kind Notice and Protection of Providence; they were *Aliens* from the Divine Commonwealth, and, for their shocking Abominations, utterly banished out of it: And upon this Account, we need not wonder that the Heathen Nations had each their respective Kings, or rather arbitrary Tyrants (which in Fact most of them were) to lead out their Armies, and to prescribe them Laws. These miserable Nations had no true Confidence in an overruling Providence, they partly confided in human Strength, and partly in the Power and Assistance of *Arts Magick*, and the Enchantments and Incantations of those Agents of Superstition, their Soothsayers and Wizards.

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We need not therefore wonder that the ignorant deluded Heathens were easily duped into a State of Slavery, so as to adore their Tyrants, to a Degree not inferior to that of paying them Divine Honours. For the Pomp and *glittering Regalia* of their Monarchs (Shews ever captivating to *weak* and vulgar Minds) deluded the idolatrous Heathens into a vain Belief, that that their Tyrants were something more than Mortals. This I take to have been the Reason why each different Nation was so fond of having a pompous incontrollable Tyrant at the Head of its Affairs: And as the eternal *Adversary* of God and Man is always usurping a Power like that of Heaven, so he was ever for interposing in all the important Undertakings of those idolatrous Tyrants: And so fatally did he delude the Heathen Nations, as to have his Idols enquired at, and his *Priests* and *Wizards* consulted under all extraordinary Events. This the Grand Deceiver did, that he might *ape* the great Prerogative of God himself, at whose Mouth the Servants of the Lord always enquired, upon any great and important Emergency. And as by this Means, the Seducer of Man had the same Divine Honours paid him by his *deluded Vassals*, as the *Servants* of Heaven paid to the living God; it has been, as I take it, this diabolical Practice, and blasphemous Pretence of foretelling *future Events*, that has cast so many Reflections upon the Conduct of the true Prophets of the Lord,

Lord, whom some undistinguishing Heads treat, at this very Day, as little better than Impostors or Enthusiasts; little considering how base and absurd it is to ridicule the Gift of Prophecy in General, for no other Reason, but because there have been false Prophets, who, for the Punishment of such as confide in these Instruments of Darkness have deluded whole Nations into Madness and Destruction.

And as it has been observed that the Plan of the Jewish Government, in the Days of *Samuel*, was a Divine Republick, I think the Plan of Government amongst the Heathen Nations, at that Time, was an arbitrary and cruel Dominion with the Grand Opposer of God at the Head of those idolatrous Kingdoms. The Israelites were *under* God's peculiar Notice and Protection, the Nations *under* the fatal Influence of seducing Spirits, and their own treacherous Imaginations.

And as this was actually the Case, what *Evil Genius*, what mad Infatuation could tempt the Israelites to change their happy Government for that diabolical and cruel Tyranny, under which the Nations of that Age miserably groaned? This Demand of Israel, to have a King set over them, in Imitation of the Gentiles, was a manifest Apostasy from Heaven, and putting themselves under the

Protection of evil Spirits: *For they have not,* says God to *Samuel* (Chap. VIII. 7.) *rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.* The Affront was chiefly levelled against God; and their Rebellion was such as could never have been expected from Men who had but just then had a memorable Instance of God's Power and Readiness to save them, in his miraculous Destruction of the *Philistines* * by terrible Lightnings and mighty Thunders. It was this, amongst other Things, that made the Israelites highly blameable in asking them a King at that particular Season. And as the Crime of so doing was great (witness the uncommon Thunder in Wheat-Harvest, sent as a Token of God's Indignation †) so the Peoples Plea for asking a King was in Fact false; or had it been really true, it was a very weak one. Their Plea for asking a King was (principally) the Age ‡ and Infirmary of *Samuel*, as if he began to be incapable of discharging his sacred Office of Judge any longer. But this was a downright Falshood, because *Samuel* continued in the Days of *Saul* to execute his sacred Office, and, more than once, gave sufficient Proofs of his Courage and Abilities in advising, admonishing and reproofing, both the People and their *new* appointed King. Nay, whenever the Kingdom was in *deep Distress*, Recourse was always had to the Counsel and Assistance

* See I Sam. vii. 10. † I Sam. xii. 17. ‡ I Sam. viii. 5.

Assistance of this Holy Man. And though the People had treated him with so much Ignominy and Contempt, in Rejecting him from being their Judge, yet this great and pious Man waves the Indignity with a true Spirit of Charity; and instead of either breaking out into angry Upbraidings, or *proud* Boastings of the many great Things he had done for that ungrateful People, he assures them he should ever have their *best* Interest at Heart, and would neither be wanting in his Endeavours, or his *Prayers*, for their future Good. *As * for me*, says he, *God forbid that I should Sin against the Lord, in ceasing to pray for you. But I will teach you the good and the right Way.* As therefore the Peoples Plea for asking a King to reign over them in *Samuel's* Life-time, on Account of his pretended Age and Infirmities, was in Fact false, so had it been true, it was nevertheless a very weak Plea. For suppose *Samuel* had been incapable of discharging his high Function, yet in that Age it belonged to God, and not to the People, nor to *Samuel* neither, of his own Mind, to Change the Plan of Government. For as God was at the Head of his Republick, he best knew what to do after *Samuel's* Demise. God had long before † predicted, that the People, when once they were entered into their promised Inheritance, would want a King to reign over them: By which he does not seem

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to

* 1 Sam. xii. 23, † See Deut. xvii.

to disapprove of Kingly Government, but only cautions them, not by any Means to Attempt this Change of Government, without his immediate Appointment.

However, that God did resent this Behaviour of the People in asking them a King, at *that Season*, let the Words of *Hosea* * determine; *I gave thee a King in mine Anger, and took him away in my Wrath.* These Words are so literally applicable to King *Saul*, both in his Advancement to the Kingdom, and in his tragical Fall, that we need not doubt but God was highly displeased with his People, for demanding a King to reign over them at that *particular Juncture*. That particular Juncture I mention, because I would not have it imagined that there was any Crime in asking a King purely in *itself*: The Crime of the People was not for asking a King, but for asking a King to reign over them, when God *himself* was their King. It was base Ingratitude, for Rejecting that *mighty* Rock of their Salvation, who had so often saved their Lives by great and *wonderful* Deliverances. And since the People had, but a few Months ago, been so miraculously delivered from the powerful Army of the *Philistines*, by the more *powerful* Prayers of *Samuel*; it was vile Ingratitude to *Samuel*, and monstrous Rebellion against Heaven, to Reject both God and their Judge from reigning over them any longer. And to fill up the Measure of this Iniquity, the People

ple want to change the Government under God and his Prophet, for that cruel and diabolical Plan of the idolatrous Nations.

There is still one further Aggravation of this People's Guilt ; for though *Samuel*, by God's exprefs Command, gave them an exact *Detail** of those future *Hardships* which their Kings would lay upon them, they persist in their Demand ; *Nay, but a King shall reign over us* : They were determined, in Defiance of God, and his loving Admonitions, to reject Him from being their King, and to have an *Earthly Supreme* over them, like the Heathen Nations. A King therefore was appointed them : And as *Samuel* was so able and faithful a Counsellor, God was pleased to continue him in his Sacred Office, that both *Saul* and the People might consult that venerable Counsellor in all Matters of Moment. And surely now it might be expected, that a People, under their own *much desired* Plan of Government, would be kept under some tolerable Order : They had a King to keep them in Subjection, and a Prophet of the Lord to consult upon all sudden Disasters. They had *Saul* to fight their Battles in the Field, and *Samuel* to pray for Victory and Success : But alas ! in less than three Years, both the People and their King

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* 1 Sam. viii.

rebel against God, and for so doing, become Slaves to the *Philistines*, who had the People of *Israel* so much in Subjection, as not to suffer one *Smith* to dwell in all the Land of *Israel*, lest the Hebrews should make them Swords or Spears. And so miserably were the People destitute of Instruments of War, that it is thus recorded, *And it came to pass in the Day * of Battle, that there was neither Sword nor Spear found in the Hand of any of the People who were with Saul and Jonathan.* Miserable Reverse of Fortune! The People now might see their Folly and Impiety for having so unreasonably asked themselves a King; and for confiding more in human Strength, than in the Power and Protection of the *Living God*.

But behold, the next Thing we hear, is *Saul's* being rejected from being King over *Israel*, and *David* anointed in his Stead. Upon this, *Saul* adds Crime to Crime, he first forsakes his God, and then goes to consult the Witch of *Endor*. For when *Samuel* was dead, and *Saul* consequently deprived of the Advice of that Holy Man, he himself boldly assays to *inquire* of the Lord what to do, when he was so hard beset by his Enemies: No Answer is given: Upon which he goes to *Endor* †; and, by a strange Infatuation, thinks to call up *Samuel's* Ghost by the Power of Witchcraft. And notwithstanding *Saul* would not hearken to *Samuel*, while living, according as God had commanded, yet now, contrary

* 1 Sam. xiii. 22. † 1 Sam. xxviii. 7. to

to God's Command, he wants to consult this Man of God after he was dead. And so tragical was the *Exit* of this first of the Hebrew Kings, that he fell at last upon his own Sword, and became in some Degree, a Self-Executioner. With this deluded Prince, fell *Jonathan* his valiant and pious Son; a Character, which, though not common, it is nevertheless very *compatible*, there being no Courage equal to that which Religion inspires.

After the Death of *Saul* and *Jonathan*, Holy *David* ascends the Throne, to which God had some Years before elected him. And as *David* has that *eminent* Encomium of being a Man after God's own Heart, and from whom the Great Redeemer of fallen Man derived his Descent, as pertaining to the Flesh, I am inclined to think, that if the People had been content under *Samuel's* Administration, till his Demise, *David*, and not *Saul*, was to have been appointed Captain over *Israel*. For as the great Anointed of the Father, was to sit upon *David's* Throne, and to be the *last* King over the House of *Israel*, and of whose Kingdom there is to be no End, so it is not unlikely but *David* was designed to have been the *first* King of *Israel*. But this being amongst the great *Arcana* of Heaven, it may be neither prudent nor safe to pry into it overmuch; therefore waving every Conjecture of this Nature, let us just take a short View of the People's Conduct in the Reign of the Man after God's

God's own Heart. But in the first Place, let the Import of this high Character be a little inquired into : For, to say of the best of Mortals, that he is a Man *after* God's own Heart, seems, if not rightly explained, to be a Character, which no Man living ever could deserve. The Meaning then of the Phrase, is, that *David*, considered in his private Life, made it his principal Endeavour (though he was twice so fatally overseen) to conform himself to the great *Pattern* of all Purity and Perfection, and to be in Kind, though not in Degree, *Holy as God himself is Holy*. And the eminent Title generally bestowed upon this illustrious Man, is, to this Day, that of *Holy David*. And as to *David's* public Character, this appears to have been the most exalted of any left upon Record. And I apprehend, it was to *David's* Conduct as Prince over *Israel*, that God gives him this high Encomium, *I have chosen me a Man after my own Heart* ; that is, one who, as Prince of the People of *Israel*, would execute all that God had purposed to be done.

The Grand Design of Heaven in bringing the People of *Israel* into the Possession of the Canaanites, was to root out Idolatry from that Part of the Earth, and to introduce the Worship of the *Living* God in its Stead. And as *David* so utterly subdued all his idolatrous Enemies, and was likewise as eminent for his Piety and *constant* Attendance in the Tabernacle,

Tabernacle, as for his Courage in the Camp, it is to this exalted Character, that the Encomium given him by the Lip of Truth, principally relates ; for what the Eternal *Mind* had purposed, that *David* put in Execution ; he therefore might be called a Man *Secundum Dei Sententiam*.

The Import then of this Phrase (*A Man after God's own Heart*) being a little explained, we are now to view the Conduct of the People under the Reign of *David*. With Regard to the first Table of the Divine Law, the People of *Israel* stand much clearer in the Reign of *David*, than in any other Period of the like Continuance. We hear very little of Idolatry in the whole Reign of *David* ; and one grand Reason was the Force of the *Royal Example*. For as it was the greatest Joy of *David's* Life to attend the Public Worship of his God, and a Pleasure more adequate to his Royal Breast to handle the melodious Cymbal, than to wield the Regal Sceptre, this religious Conduct of the Prince, could not, one would think, but inspire his Subjects with a Love and Veneration for Divine Service. Religion does indeed appear lovely even in a Cell or a Cottage, but when this *Celestial Beauty* is in King's Palaces, she is in her most glorious Apparel : Devotion is
never

never in such Perfection of Beauty, as when in Kings Courts, and by them introduced into the Temple of God. This however, was *David's* first Care, to pay his constant Devoirs to that glorious Being, by whom Kings rule: And yet notwithstanding this commanding Example of the Throne, *David* could not keep his People under that Awe and Veneration for Religious Worship, as the Importance of the mighty Subject demanded from all Ranks of Men. And though (as already observed) Idolatry received the greatest Check in the Reign of Holy *David*, yet his Subjects could not be restrained from many great and shocking Enormities: And, what was still more tragical, the greatest of these Enormities, were committed amongst *David's* own Children, in spite of the Royal Example to the contrary. And as to the People, they were not to be contented with the greatest Series of Victories and Success under their prosperous and heroic Prince. For though God always blessed his Servant *David* with Victory in the Day of Battle, and gave him at length Rest and Ease from all his Enemies, still it was not in the Power of this Holy Man, to keep Peace among his own Subjects. His Priests and Counsellors more than once deceived him; his Men of War forsook him; and his own Son *Absalom* was base enough to head the Traitors of his *Father's Throne*; and forced the good old King to flee out of the Land,

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for fear of those very Men, whose Lives *David* had so often preserved. But as this Crime of *Abfalom* was contrary to Nature, he soon met with the Fate which his Rebellion against an aged Father justly deserved.

We may find therefore, even in the Reign of Holy *David*, which stands one of the Brightest in the Jewish Annals, that there are Men in all Ages and Kingdoms, whom nothing can keep within the Bounds of Duty. There are some People not to be reclaimed from hardened Impiety, either by the highest Examples or by the greatest Rewards. And whenever these Mens sensual Appetites, or their present *imaginary* Interests step in the Way, they are deaf to every Argument, and harden their Hearts against every Call to Reflect and Consider what they are about, and what will at long-run be the Consequence of all deliberate and unrepented Impiety. How great may be the Number of such perverse and hardened Sinners in the present Age, is not my Business at present to enquire; but that some such there are who cannot be reclaimed by any *finite Expedients*, is but too apparent: Some only I say, because I am well convinced there are many Thousands that are of better Dispositions. There are, I trust in God, some, who are Religious out of free Choice; and serve their Maker upon the generous Principles of Love and Gratitude. Others, who though not quite so ingenuous and perfect,
are

are yet to be wrought upon by Arguments of Fear; and *this Fear of the Lord being the first Step to Wisdom*, will (if not wilfully stifled) ripen by Degrees into that *excellent Fruit*, sincere Love of God. Others there are, who have often been reclaimed from a dissolute Course of Life by some remarkable temporal Affliction, and have been taught that Lesson of Wisdom by the *Eloquence* of Adversity, which they would not learn from the most moving Lectures of the Holy Ghost. But then though there are great Numbers in each of these Classes, yet that there are some, on the other Hand, who persevere in Sin, and boast of their Impieties to the last; who are not to be reclaimed from their wicked Pursuits by all the temporary Expedients, which even Omnipotence itself can try, is a *sad Truth*, confirmed from the History of every Age and every People.

This Truth has been too visible from so much of the sacred History as I have already laid before you. And if there have ever been some Men not to be reclaimed by any temporary Punishments, from the Fall of *Adam*, down to the Reign of Holy *David*, it is much to be feared whether we shall find the Perverseness of Human Nature altered at all for the Better, in the following, or any of the succeeding Reigns, of the Kings of *Palestine*. And upon this Account, I shall not detain the Reader a great While longer in the Jewish Story,

Story, but only take a cursory View, as we pass along, of the Conduct of *Israel* in a few of the most interesting Events, down to the Babylonian Captivity; and from thence, till we come a little nearer to the Appearance of the great *Restorer* of lapsed Nature.

S E C T. III.

WE are now to enter upon the Reign of King *Solomon*: The Beginning of this Monarch's Life, seemed to promise every Blessing to himself and his People, that the most Sanguine of his Subjects could wish. For as the Divine Being was pleased to make an Offer to this young *Prince*, to bestow upon him whatever he should request, *Solomon* had the Humility and Discretion, not to make any Demand that was either in itself unreasonable, or in the least confined to Self-love or private Interest. He did not (as might, from the towering Thoughts of youthful Ambition, be naturally enough supposed) ask either Riches, unbounded Power, or unrestrained Pleasures: But the Boon which *Solomon* craved was a wise and understanding Heart, to enable him to judge the People of his Kingdom. This Divine Gift God readily bestowed; and forasmuch as this young *Prince* preferred Wisdom to Riches and Honours, God, with the First, granted him the other also. *I have also* (says he) *
given

given thee that which thou hast not asked, both Riches and Honour, so that there shall not be any among the Kings like unto thee all thy Days.

And I cannot but think, that when we hear Solomon asking the Boon of Wisdom so ardently, he was already endowed with the Gift he requested: For what less than a very exalted Portion of Wisdom, could prompt a Prince in the *Pride* of Life, surrounded with all the captivating Attendants of a Throne, to single out this celestial Beauty from amidst the Rest of the *alluring Train*? For as God knows and directs the Thoughts of Man long before, so he had previously conveyed into the Heart of Solomon a Portion at least of that Heavenly *Dowry* which he requested in his Divine Dream at *Gibeon* *. For it is an Argument of Wisdom for a Man to be only *desirous* of obtaining this Divine Guest, and to know whose Gift she is †. And when a Man who has it in his Option to ask what he will, and it shall be given him, to prefer Wisdom to every other captivating Gift, is an evident Proof that such a Man was already above the common Level of Understanding. A Fool, in such Circumstances, would not have known what to ask; a proud and envious Mind, would have wanted unbounded Power and Dominion, for the Sake of being lordly and domineering over all around him; the covetous Wretch would have poured out his Prayer

* 1 Kings iii. 5.

† See Book of Wisdom, viii. 21.

Prayer in the Language of the insatiable Leech*,
Give, give. And the Man whose Soul is riv-
 eted to low, sordid and earthly Objects,
 would have requested for nothing so much,
 as to spend all his Days in this *sluggish Region*
 of Sense, and slothful Indulgence. But *Solomon*
 requested none of these: Wisdom was
 his only Wish, and Wisdom he obtained in
 that exalted Degree never bestowed upon Man
 before or since. And while this *young Prince*
 employed his Wisdom in advancing the Ho-
 nour of his Maker, in promoting the Cause
 of Piety, and in building God a House, a
 Structure for Art, Magnificence, and stupen-
 dous Glory, which struck every Beholder dumb
 with awful Wonder, he was the *Delight* of
 Man, the *Ornament* of Kings, and the *Pride*
 of Human Nature.

But how shall I now speak? I wish I could
 stop here, or had a small Portion of *Solomon's*
 Wisdom, to know how to express my Senti-
 ments in the Sequel, of *Solomon's* Conduct, so as
 neither to offend against strict Truth, nor the
 Rules of strict Decorum, when this glorious
 Prince is the *delicate* Subject. But however,
 Truth must not be injured; it is too sacred to
 be prostituted, either to an Excess of Delicacy,
 or through Fear of the greatest Earthly Pow-
 S ers,

ers. How therefore this *young Prince* came to be overseen, or whether, in the fatal Eclipse of *Solomon's* Wisdom, Providence had not some great Ends in View, by leaving his Miscarriage upon Record, as an everlasting Monument of the Insufficiency of Human Reason, when left to itself, I shall not at present inquire. But that the Wisdom of *Solomon* at last was baffled, either by the Subtilty of the Grand Deceiver, or by the soft, enchanting Whispers of those *fair Idolatresses*, which he took to his Bed, is but too sadly evident from the *dark Eve* of this Monarch's Life. For it is recorded, that his strange Wives alienated his Heart from his Maker, to serve the Idol Gods of the Nations around him: This fond, uxorious Prince, gratified all his Consorts, by erecting High Places and Altars for each of their national Gods; as *Asheroth*, the Goddess of the *Zidonians*; *Chemosh*, the God of the *Moabites*, and *Molech*, the Abomination of the Children of *Ammon*, with all the dark Train of Heathen Deities*. But behold the tragical Consequences of King *Solomon's* Apostasy was a fearful Interruption of those *Halcyon Days*, which this Monarch had till then enjoyed. The Close of this Prince's Reign was blackened with thick Clouds and raging Tempest: He was insulted by Princes who had once been tributary to his Crown, and his Throne not a little shaken by one of his

* See 1 Kings xi.

his own Domestics. And such dreadful *Havock* and *Confusion* did *Solomon's* Apostasy introduce into the Kingdom in general, as well as into his own Royal House, that God's peculiar People were miserably divided into two Rival Kingdoms. Ten Tribes are rent away from the House of *David*, and given to *Jeroboam*, a Servant of *Solomon*. This fatal Sentence was pronounced upon *Solomon*, yet, for the Sake of *David*, respited during *Solomon's* Reign; but in the Reign of his Son *Reboboam*, *Israel* rebelled against the House of *David*, and made *Jeroboam* King; And there was none that followed the House of *David*, but the Tribe of * *Judah* only. And as *Solomon's* fatal Alliance with his idolatrous Consorts, was the Reason why Ten Tribes were rent from the House of *David*, and transferred over to a Man entirely out of the Royal Lineage, so when God confers the Kingdom upon *Jeroboam*, he acquaints him upon what sacred and inviolable Conditions he was to hold the Sceptre of his Kingdom, (*viz.*) by Righteousness and sincere Obedience to the Laws of *Jacob's* God: A Sceptre of Righteousness was primarily meant to be the Sceptre of *Jacob's* Kingdom, though never found so, but when it came to the Great Anointed of the Father. But however, *Jeroboam* was expressly told by the Prophet *Abijah* †, that the Reason why the Kingdom was rent out of *Solomon's* House,

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was

* 1 Kings, xii. 20.

† 1 Kings, xi.

was the *crying* Sin of Idolatry, with its hellish Train of Mischiefs: And likewise as expressly forewarned, to avoid that fatal Rock upon which *Solomon* had split. *Jeroboam* was assured, that if he kept the Statutes and Commands of his God, the Kingdom of *Israel* should be established in his House for ever. But for all these previous and most solemn Cautions, *Jeroboam* soon fell off: And notwithstanding he was so well apprized of *Solomon's* Crimes, and had been Eye-Witness of their fatal Consequence, still he wilfully runs into Sins Ten Thousand Times more notorious: He, by a Kind of *refined Impiety*, erects Calves of Gold, which by the dazzling Lustre of the bewitching Metal, might captivate vulgar Minds, and restrain the People from repairing to God's Temple at *Jerusalem*, lest the Kingdom of *Israel* should fall back again * to the House of David. Do but behold the complicated Guilt of this idolatrous Son of *Nebat*; he palliates his Crime of setting up the two Idols in *Dan* and *Bethel*, with a *Trick of State*: and though he was both assured, that the House of *David* was never to have the whole Kingdom transferred over to it any more, and that it could not continue in his own House, if once he commenced Idolater, yet, (so stupid Vice always is) it was by setting up Idols, that *Jeroboam* thought to preserve the Kingdom. His Sin and Folly were both quickly rebuked,

* 1 Kings, xii.

rebuked, but this deluded Man endeavoured to murder the Prophet that was sent unto him : His Hand was miraculously blasted in the vile Attempt, but, upon *Jeroboam's* Request, as miraculously restored to its former Soundness, and by the Intercession of that very Man, whose Blood *Jeroboam* would have cruelly shed, and for no *other Reason*, but because the good old Man told him the Truth. But this idolatrous Son of *Nebat*, who became that *shocking Proverb* in all After-Ages, for *making Israel to sin*, was (with his whole Posterity) extirpated from the Face of the Earth : For consult, 1 *Kings* XV. and you'll find *Baasha*, a Man of another Tribe and Family, conspired against *Nadab*, *Jeroboam's* Son, and *slew him, and reigned in his stead.* And it came to pass when he reigned, he destroyed all the House of *Jeroboam*, he left not to *Jeroboam* any that breathed, till he had destroyed him ; according to the Saying of the Lord, which he spoke by his Servant *Ahijah the Shilonite.* Here then we see one House, utterly extirpated from the Earth for wilful Disobedience, even after *Jeroboam* had been expressly forewarned what would be his Punishment, in Case he forsook the Commands of *his God.*

After the total Destruction of *Jeroboam*, the Kingdom of *Israel* passed into the House of

Baasha, of the Tribe of *Issachar*; and though this Man was chosen by Providence, to execute God's Sentence upon the House of *Jeroboam*, and knew full well what the Crimes were that called down this Vengeance upon the wicked Son of *Nebat*, yet *Baasha* himself ran into the like, and greater Crimes, and brought utter Destruction upon his whole House, as *Jeroboam* had done upon his before: For *Zimri* destroyed all the House of *Baasha*, according to the Word of the Lord, which he spake against *Baasha* by *Jehu* the Prophet †. *Zimri* reigned but Seven Days, at the End of which, he set Fire to the * *Royal Palace*, and perished himself in the Flames of his own desperate kindling. *Omri* was the next King of *Israel*; but he also committed the most atrocious Wickedness in the Sight of the Lord; for he is recorded to have walked in all the Ways of *Jeroboam*, that Wretch, who even compelled his People to Sin, and paved the Way to all those fearful Evils which afterwards ensued. To *Omri* succeeded *Abab* his Son, that dreadful Example of unparalelled Profaneness whom *Jezebel* his Wife stirred up. This Reign exhibits a most tragical Instance of that National Ruin which must always unavoidably ensue, when the Prince takes an idolatrous Consort to his Bed. For of *Abab* it is thus related; *Ahab, the Son of Omri, did Evil in the Sight of the Lord, above all*

† 1 Kings xvi. 3, 4.

* See 1 Kings xvi. 13.

all that were before him. And it came to pass, as if it had been a light Thing for him to walk in the Sins of Jeroboam the Son of Nebat; that he took to Wife Jezebel, the Daughter of Ethbaal King of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him *. This Prince was so blinded by the worst of Heathen Superstitions, that he even sold himself to work Evil: He put himself wholly under the Direction of Jezebel, his idolatrous Consort, and Baal, her's and her Father's Idol. And from the Moment he became Captive to that fair Idolatress, he was Baal's Servant, and as such sold for a Slave to the Author of Sin and of Misery. *Abab*, for this atrocious Crime, which hurried him on to Blasphemies, Murders, Oppression of his Subjects, &c. was threatned with fearful Judgments: Upon this he humbled himself, and went softly. Then was God pleased, in Mercy, to respite a while the Judgment of *Abab*. But as *Abab* soon fell off, or rather as his Repentance was the Effect of Fear only, and not any change of Heart; the next Thing we hear of this deluded Prince, is his Seduction by those false Prophets to whom he had ever listened, and he falls in Battle at Ramoth Gilead †. And upon *Jebu's* Advancement to the Throne, he slew every Soul that belonged to the House of *Abab*, according to the Word of the Lord which he spake by his Servant *Elijah* ‡. But notwithstanding *Jebu*

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was

* 1 Kings xvi. 30, 31. † 1 Kings xxii. ‡ 1 Kings xxi.

was very punctual in executing God's Sentence of Vengeance upon the wicked House of *Ahab*, he did not purge his *own* of Idols; but walked in that wicked *Path* of *Jeroboam*, so often mentioned, and so often leading all that trod in it to fearful Ruin. And after *Jehu* and his Sons, of the Fourth Generation, had sat upon the Throne of *Israel*, *Shallum* * conspired against the House of *Jehu*, and this also, like the wicked Houses of *Jeroboam*, *Baasha*, and *Ahab*, (notwithstanding each House had the *recent* Example of the preceding one) was utterly destroyed.

And from *Shallum's* Conspiracy, down to *Hoshea*, the Son of *Elah*, we meet with nothing but the most tragical Calamities: *Kings* dethroned and murdered; and the People following each their *own* Inventions; some bowing down to *Baal*, others making their Sons and their Daughters pass through the Fire to *Moloch*, and the Land in general using Divinations and Enchantments, and *universally* selling themselves to work Evil in the Sight of the Lord, to provoke him to Anger. But behold, the dreadful *Catastrophe* of *Israel* is now at Hand; the Captivity and Miseries of the People, so often foretold, are now at the Door: The *Tragedy* of Sin is just going to be open-

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* 2 Kings xv. 10.

ed, and the Sword of Divine Wrath is lifted over a devoted Land. For it came to pass in the Ninth Year of Hoshea * King of Israel, that Shalmaneser King of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria. There they remained miserable Slaves of idolatrous Tyrants; and forasmuch as the Jews could not, by all the Methods of Providence, be restrained from serving strange Gods in their own Land, they are at last forced to serve Strangers in a Land that was not their own.

As therefore we may now see whither the Path of unrepented Sins led the People of Israel; and as from the foregoing History we may be convinced, that some Minds are proof against all Arguments of Reason and Conviction, I hope, from this invincible Obstinacy of the Jews, the Christians will beware of walking in the same destructive Paths of deliberate Vice and boasted Profaneness. This Path of unrepented Sins has, as we see, already led Captive every Tribe of Israel out of the Holy Land into Assyria, but the Tribe of Judah only: This was yet remaining at Jerusalem: But if we return back from Assyria, and step into the Holy City to view the Conduct of the King and People of Judah, as we have already done that of Israel, we shall be sadly con-

* 2 Kings xvii. 6.

convinced, that the Tribe of *Judah* is hastening apace to the like fearful Ruin with that of its Brethren.

It has been observed, that in the Reign of *Rehoboam*, Ten Tribes were rent from the House of *David* and given to *Jeroboam*, the Son of *Nebat*: And upon this, there became two distinct Kingdoms in the Land of *Palestine*. The Capital of *Israel* was *Samaria*; that of *Judah*, *Jerusalem*, the City of *David*. And as it was from this Holy Man that the great Redeemer of Human Race was to spring, it will behove us to treat the History of those Kings in the Line of the Messiah, with all imaginable Reverence, as far as Truth (ever sacred) will permit us. These Princes in the Line of the Messiah were Fourteen, from *David* to the Babylonian Captivity: This Line of the Messiah, was an uninterrupted Succession from Father to Son, the Kingdom of *Judah* being never to depart out of the House of *David*. Several of these Princes in this Line, were eminent Examples of Piety and heroic Virtue. The Glory, Wisdom, and Magnificence of *Solomon*, will ever be remembered with Reverence and Astonishment. *Asa's* Zeal for Religion, (as described 1 *Kings* XV.) is a noble Example to all future Kings. *Hezekiah's* Confidence in his God, his Prayer, and

and his Devotion, are everlasting Monuments of his Fame. *Josiah* has left behind him an eternal Memorial of a pious and good Mind, whose exalted Character is, by *Ben-Sirach*, thus described, *The Remembrance of Josiah, is like the Composition of the Perfume that is made by the Art of the Apothecary; it is sweet as Honey in all Mouths, and as Music at a Banquet of Wine. He behaved himself uprightly in the Conversion of the People, and took away the Abominations of Iniquity. He directed his Heart unto the Lord, and in the Times of the Ungodly, he established the Worship of God.* As therefore the Kings of *Judah*, in the Line of the Messiah were, many of them, so far superior in Piety and Wisdom to their Kindred Princes of the other Tribes, it might be reasonably expected that the People of *Jerusalem* would have kept more aloof from those shocking Enormities practised amongst their Heathen Adversaries. But so incurable is the Poison of Sin, when once spread throughout a Kingdom, and become what Fools call *Fashion and Taste*, that nothing can prevent the deadly Contagion but some remarkable National Judgments: Nay, and some Men are proof against these, and will grow more wantonly Profane the very Moment these Judgments are removed. And here I am forced, in spite of the greatest Veneration for the House of *David*, to observe that the Kings and People of *Judah* are more culpable for falling off
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from God, than the other Tribes, because they had these fearful Judgments before their Eyes, to which their Prophets ever appeal. Ten Tribes they saw were already gone into miserable Captivity, and they were, from Time to Time, called upon to forsake those Abominations which had brought down this dreadful Calamity upon the Kingdom of *Israel*: They were most solemnly assured, that unless they grew wiser and better, by these *fearful* Judgments upon *Samaria*, the like, or greater, would soon be inflicted upon *Jerusalem*. But for all these merciful *Calls*, the Men of *Judah* would not forsake their Enormities: They still wantonly bid Defiance to Heaven, and persist in their abominable Impieties, notwithstanding they had so many *living* Instances of God's Vengeance upon impenitent Sinners, in the Captivity of their Kindred Tribes. Let us therefore be pleased to consider, whether a stronger Proof can be given of the Inefficacy of all *temporary* Expedients to reclaim some perverse Minds, than this strange Infatuation of the People of *Judah* affords us. And if it should be asked, what could possibly be the Cause, why the Jews became so astonishingly hardened, as not to be reclaimed, either by the greatest Mercies, or the most fearful Vengeance? my Answer is, It was that *Hell-born* Monster, Idolatry, which paved the Way to that invincible Stubborness and Hardness of Heart, which this miserable People are, to this
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very Hour, so many living Monuments. For after *Solomon* was seduced, by his idolatrous Consorts, to forsake the Worship of the *God* of *David*, and tempted by those enchanting *Sirens* to introduce the *accursed* Abominations of *Moab*, *Ammon*, and the rest of his Heathen Neighbours, into the Holy City, it was out of all human Power utterly to purge the Land of false Gods. And as the golden Calves of *Jeroboam* became the fatal Cause of *Israel's* Sin, and of all the sad Train of Ills which overtook that miserable Nation, so the execrable Idolatries which *Solomon's* strange Wives introduced into the City of *David*, could never, from that *inauspicious* Day, be wholly removed out of the Land. And notwithstanding many of the Kings of *Judab* caused the Idol Groves to be burnt, and the Images to be broken down, still this *Evil Genius* hovered around the Land, and upon the Accession of any Prince, whose Heart was not steadfast with his Maker, the Plague of Idolatry broke out afresh, and often spread with greater Fury than in the former Reigns. For the Truth is this, that there is something in paying *Divine Honours* to any *created* Being, so very stupid in itself, as well as highly provoking to the great *adorable* First Cause, that where any People once give way to it, they are struck with judicial Blindness: They are so infatuated as to believe a *Lie*, and to Worship that *Lie* as God, which neither can hear, see, nor

speak,

speak, till Idolatry, which was at first their
 Crime, becomes at last their terrible Punish-
 ment. And this indeed is but agreeable to
 Divine Justice, that in such Things as any
 People purposely and repeatedly offend, in
 those they well deserve to be punished. This
 has ever been the Method of Providence, both
 with Regard to Individuals, and to whole Na-
 tions. And to this present Hour the Jews are
 a living Example of the Rule before us. They,
 for so many Ages, wilfully shut their Eyes
 against all the merciful Methods of Convicti-
 on, that judicial spiritual Blindness has hither-
 to been their fearful Punishment. The Jews
 were long before the Babylonian Captivity,
 making very horrid Strides to that miserable
 Region of Darkness and Error, under which
 we yet behold them. They gradually arrived
 to greater Degrees of Wickedness, under most
 of their Kings, from *Solomon* down to *Manasseh*.

In this Reign, Idolatry, with all its dark
 Train, set up its Standard in open Defiance of
 the God of *Jacob*: This unhappy Prince ex-
 ceeded the very Heathens * in their most
 shocking Abominations. He built Altars to
 false Gods, even in God's own House, of which
*the Lord had said, In Jerusalem I will put my
 Name.* Nay, this deluded King erected Idol
 Altars in both the Courts of *Solomon's* Tem-
 ple: And to such an astonishing Height of
 mad Superstition did *Manasseh* arrive, that he

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* See 2 Kings xxi.

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made his Royal Offspring to *pass through the Fire* in Honour to the *grand Deceiver*: And to fill up the Cup of National Wickedness, he encouraged that most diabolical and ignorant Practice of observing Times, using Inchantments, and dealing with familiar Spirits and Wizards. This atrocious Impiety provoked God to denounce Judgment upon *Jerusalem* in these alarming Words, *Behold, I am bringing such Evil upon Judah and Jerusalem, that whosoever shall hear of it, both his Ears shall tingle.* This fearful Calamity, even the Piety and Obedience of *Josiah*, *Manasseh's* Grandson, could not stem out of the Land. For though this pious young Prince, repaired the Ruins of God's House, which the frantic Idolatry of the two preceding Reigns had wrought; tho' he purged the Temple of Idols, put the *Priests* to Death, banished or destroyed, all that used Inchantments, or dealt with familiar Spirits, and utterly abolished all the Monuments of *Tophet*, *Moloch*, and other false Deities, yet, I say, notwithstanding this pious Zeal of *Josiah*, such, and so shocking had the Abominations of *Manasseh* been, that *Judah* was decreed to be led away captive, like the other revolting Tribes.

And if we cast our Eyes to the Reign of *Jehoiachin*, *Josiah's* Grandson, we shall find that

that *Nebuchadnezzar* * King of *Babylon* laid Siege to the *Holy City*, took it, and carried from thence to *Babylon*, the King of *Judah*, the *Queen-Mother*, with all the *Nobles*, the *Men of War*, *Craftsmen* and *Smiths*; none remained in the *City of Jerusalem*, save the poorest Sort of the *People of the Land*. And after the King of *Babylon* had carried away *Jehoiachin* and his *People* Captive to *Babylon*, he made *Zedekiah* a Sort of tributary King in the *Land of Judah*: But when *Zedekiah* rebelled against the King of *Babylon*, he laid Siege to *Jerusalem* again, and the *City* was forced by *Famine* to break up in the *Night*, and to flee for fear of the *Chaldeans Army*. Nevertheless, such was the *Provocation of the Men of Judah*, wherewith they had so often provoked the *Lord to Anger*, that the King of *Judah* and his *People* were overtaken by their *Enemies* in the *Plains of Jericho*. *Zedekiah* the King of *Judah* is took Captive, his *Sons* are slain in his *Presence*, his own *Eyes* put out, and then he is bound with *Fetters of Brass*, and carried to *Babylon*. Here then is the tragical Close of the *Reigns of the Kings of Judah*, and when we see the dreadful *Ruin* and *Desolation* which invincible *Profaneness* brought upon the *Land of Judah*, we are at a *Loss* whether to pity the poor *Captive Jews* now groaning under their *Calamities*, or to blame that *Impenitency* and *Hardness of Heart*, which

* 2 Kings, xxiv.

which called down these Judgments upon them.

And if we cast an Eye upon the Holy City now (as was often foretold the Jews) desolate and without Inhabitants; if we look upon the Temple of *Jacob's* God, and behold this stupendous Edifice stript of all its sacred Ornaments, its lofty Towers battered down, the stately Pillars broken in Pieces, and the serene *Mercy-Seat*, once overshadowed by Cherubims Wings, with the heavenly Pile itself, all in hideous Ruins; who amongst us can look upon this sad Scene without Tears of Sorrow and Condolement for the invincible Perverseness of the stubborn Jews, and the piteous Calamities which that Perverseness called down upon them? And if we would make a proper Application of this tragical Catastrophe of the Jews, we should look upon their Case in some Measure as our own. For let us suppose, (though I trust in a God of Mercy it will never come to pass) that we of this Nation should, for our *repeated* Provocations, be deprived of the free Exercise of our Religion in the Temple of God, and that all our sacred Buildings should be thrown down, our Cities laid into ruinous Heaps, and our Land the Prey of some *foreign* Tyrant, should we not, under these sad Events, curse our
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Folly for not growing wiser by the sacred History? For certain it is, that if *Christendom* should ever equal the Land of *Judah* in Wickedness and Infidelity, it will exceed it in Guilt: The Jewish, and every other Part of the Sacred History, is written for the Admonition of all future Ages, and if any Age should still be guilty of Jewish Blindness, the Punishment would one Time or other be greater, because the Guilt would be so. And if an obstinate Jew will meet with a more severe Sentence at the General Judgment, than the Cities of *Tyre* and *Sidon*, then, by Parity of Reasoning, a profane, impenitent Christian will be found more culpable than either Heathen or Jew, because he has their Miscarriages left upon Record, that from thence he might learn to avoid the like fatal Errors, in his own wiser and better Conduct.

S E C T. IV.

THE dreadful Calamities which the Jews, by invincible Impiety, forced the Divine Justice at last to inflict upon them, are, I am persuaded, of too alarming a Nature, to be utterly overlooked: And should it ever be the Misfortune of this, or any other Nation, to be deprived of the Use of Divine Service, and, after the dreadful Fate of this miserable People, to have all their Places of Public Worship thrown down by the malicious Ravages of some

some insulting Tyrant ; if ever our Sabbaths should be turned into Days of *Traffick*, or *unlawful Pleasures*, and we ourselves compelled on these sacred Days, to chime in with the fashionable Profanation, persuaded I am, that under *these sad Evils*, most thinking People would bitterly lament their deplorable Situation. For however cool and indifferent we may be about serving God publickly and quietly upon his Holy Sabbath, and in his House of Prayer, now it is our great Felicity to enjoy these glorious Privileges, yet should we ever be debarred the Use of these Divine Blessings, we should then even long to tread the *Courts* of our God, and to fall down with Reverence before his Footstool. For if we just turn our Eyes to the People of *Judah*, when groaning under *Babylonian* Captivity, and cast out of the Holy City and Temple, we shall find them *too* sadly convinced of the glorious Privileges of attending Divine Service, now they find themselves utterly deprived of treading the *sacred* Threshold. And as the *real* Worth of a Thing is never so well known, as by its Loss, so it was with Relation to the Jews : For whoever views them at *Babylon*, will soon be convinced, that the Thoughts of being expelled from the City of God, and from the House of his glorious Habitation, was a heavier Chain to every *thinking* Man, than all the Rest of their Captive *Fetters*. *When shall we see the pleasant Land, and tread*

the sacred Banks of Jordan's fruitful Streams ? was the moving Complaint of these Captive Exiles : With what piteous Strains do the Jews lament the ruinous Condition of the beloved City ? *How doth the City sit solitary, that was full of People ? How is she become as a Widow ? She that was great among the Nations, and Princess among the Provinces ; How is she become tributary ? The Ways of Sion do mourn, because none come to the solemn Feasts ; all her Gates are desolate, her Princes sigh, her Virgins are afflicted, and she is in Bitterness.* And throughout this inspired *Elogy* * ; we have such a *Picture* of mournful Grief, as far exceeds all the Power and Skill of Human Painting. For so soft, striking and beautiful is the *Imagery*, under which the Divine Pencil figures out the Remorse and Anguish of the disconsolate Captives, that for any one to look upon this moving Piece with dry Eyes, would betray such a savage hard-heartedness, as *even* the stubborn Jew, in the Days of his greatest Obstinacy, would have blushed to be guilty of. And whoever will read over with due Attention, the *inspired* Breathings of the Holy City, described under the moving Emblem of an oppressed, disconsolate *Widow*, will be forced, unless his Heart is all become flinty, to lament and condole the sad Fate of Captive *Judah*. And in this moving Lamentation of the *Babylonian* Captives, there are

* Book of the Lamentations.

are some such inimitable Strokes of *deep* Contrition, Self Conviction, penitential Remorse, and unfeigned Humiliation, as are above Description, and put all human Eloquence to an utter Stand. Nor did these miserable Captives sue to Heaven in vain ; their penitential Sighs pierced through the Clouds, and the Language of the Heart, that most *nervous Rhetoric*, demanded Audience at the Throne of Mercy. The Jews had been assured by *Moses* of old, (*Deut* IV. 30.) that *whenever they should be in Tribulation, even in the latter Days, if they would but return to the Lord their God, and be obedient unto his Voice (for the Lord thy God is a merciful God) he would not forsake them, neither destroy them, nor forget the Covenant of their Fathers, which he sware unto them.* And accordingly when the Men of *Judah* put up their Prayers to Heaven in that true Language of Penitence, Humility, Self-Conviction and bitter Remorse, God was pleased to bow down a merciful Ear to the poor Captives in *Babylon* : Heaven at once was touched with the *Miseries of Judah*, and *Jacob's God* again became the *Rock of their Salvation*. For as the cruel Treatment of the *Babylonians* towards their miserable Captives, joined to their wicked Idolatries, in spite of the repeated Admonitions of these Captives to Worship one God only, as these perverse Heathens were deaf to all the Lectures of the *sober Jews*, concerning the Unity and Supremacy

of the living God; as the King of *Babylon* and his People, ridiculed and insulted the Jews, and the God whom they worshipped, and, with a Kind of brutal Profaneness, required Mirth and Song from a broken Heart, (saying, *Sing us one of your Songs of Zion*) I say as this complicated Guilt of the Babylonians might hasten the Subversion of that august and proud Monarchy, so it paved the Way to the happy Release of the Jews. For, upon the imperial Diadem's passing from the Assyrian to the Persian Monarchs, *Cyrus*, the first King of the second *Grand Empire*, soon lifted up the Head of the Captive Jews. *Cyrus* had, by Name, been pointed out to bring about this memorable Event near a Hundred Years before he was born *. And in the first of *Ezra* it is recorded, that *in the first Year of Cyrus King of Persia, that the Word of the Lord, spoken by the Prophet might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the Spirit of Cyrus, King of Persia, that he made a Proclamation throughout all his Kingdom, and put it in Writing. The Purport of this Royal Proclamation was, that all the Jews who had been carried to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, and there detained Seventy Years by this King and his Son Evel-Merodach, should have free Permission, not only to return to the Land of Judah, but to repair the hideous Ruins of the Holy City; and to rebuild the Temple of God*

* See *Isaiah*, xlv. 1, 2.

God at *Jerusalem*: For *who* (says the Persian Monarch) *is there among you of all his People, let his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah, and build the House of the Lord God of Israel, HE is the God which is in Jerusalem. And whosoever remaineth in any Place where he sojourneth, let the Men of his Place help him with Silver and Gold, and Goods, and with Beasts, besides the free-will Offering for the House of God, which is at Jerusalem.* Nor did this glorious Monarch command his Subjects what he did not first recommend by his own Royal Example (a more forcible Law than a Thousand *dead literary* Mandates) but with a true princely and pious Heart restored to the Jews, every individual Vessel, and other sacred Utenzil, which *Nebuchadnezzar* had brought from *Jerusalem*, and had put them in the House of *his* Gods. And farther, *Cyrus* not only permitted, but issued out an imperial Mandate, that all the Jews should return to *Judah*, and immediately set about the building a House to *that true, and only Lord God who had his Dwelling at Jerusalem.* *Cyrus* was chosen for this great Purpose, that he might be an *Instrument* in the Hand of Providence to set the People of *Israel* at Liberty; to assist and encourage them in the Building of the Temple; and that by this Freedom granted to the Jews, they might spread and inculcate the Doctrine of the *Unity* and Supremacy of *Jacob's God*, throughout that vast Dominion

of *Persia*. For as infinite Wisdom can effect many *great* Purposes by one *single* Method, so God's making Choice of *Cyrus*, the Founder of the second grand Monarchy, to set the Babylonian Captives at Liberty, was not *purely* for the Sake of the Jews, but for the spiritual Advantage of the whole Persian Empire, and of all other Nations, as far as the Influence of that powerful Dominion extended.

Indeed, both the *Captivity* of the whole Kingdom of *Israel*, and the *Restoration* thereof, seem, from the Surface of Scripture, to relate to the Jews only; the *First* to punish their repeated Rebellion: Their *Deliverance* by *Cyrus*, and their Restoration to the beloved City once more, was an Argument addressed to their Ingenuity, and a most adorable Instance of God's tender Mercy and Compassion for his own peculiar People. This, as far as it goes, was well worthy of Divine Interposition; but then as the *whole* World is the Lord's, and all the Kindreds thereof, as with God there is no absolute Respect of Persons, he being alike kind and merciful to all that call upon him faithfully, so in the Jewish Captivity, first, of Ten Tribes into the different Parts of *Assyria*, and then of *Judah* to *Babylon*, infinite Wisdom seems to have had two *grand* Ends to answer; First, the humbling of the obstinate Jews; Secondly, by their Dispersion into every Part of the Earth, to bring about the *Conversion* of the *whole* Gentile

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tile World. For though the Jews, while in their own Land, fell into most shocking Abominations, which brought on their Ruin, yet when they were led Captive amongst the Heathens, Adversity opened the Eyes of their Understanding, and they learnt that Lesson of Wisdom from Bondage and Misery, which, in the Time of their Prosperity, had been so notoriously neglected. And as the Jews, under their Captivity, became so sadly convinced of their Crime, in having forsaken the *true* God, and bowed down to Idols in their own Land, so after *this* their Conviction, that there is none other Gods but ONE, they would naturally endeavour to propagate the same *interesting* Doctrine amongst those Gentile Nations whither they were dispersed.

This was a noble Undertaking, of the greatest Charity to Man, and most immediately advancing the Honour of the *true* God. These pious Labours of the Captive Jews, in propagating the Unity, would, in some Measure, atone for their former Miscarriages. And though it might be said, that those Heathen Nations did not, many of them, reap any Advantages from these *Lectures* of the Jews, still that was their own Fault. For as I cannot think, but all the Heathen Nations had been often instructed in the Belief and Worship of the true God, not only by the Light of Nature alone (that, before it was *wilfully* eclipsed, being sufficient) but by various other
Methods,

Methods, so if for all these various Methods, those Nations still blindly paid Divine Honours to Idol Gods, theirs alone was the Guilt. And as God *never* left himself without Witness amongst any People, both his Goodness and Wisdom, will *one Day* appear in full Lustre, in that Series of Punishments which has been inflicted upon most other Nations, and which upon a *superficial* Examination, seem to carry Marks of Severity and Rigour. But however this may be, one Truth is certain, that the Jews, whatever Fooleries they ran into while *at Ease* and rolling in Affluence, yet when exiled from this native Land, they long for nothing so much as to tread this sacred *House* once more: All the Wishes of this Captive People were toward the *beloved* City, and to the Holy Temple: Thither therefore they repair with Hearts full of religious Joy, at the Proclamation of *Cyrus*: They lay the Foundation of God's House; which when done, they celebrate the *joyous* Event with Instruments of Divine Music, *as David, the sweet Singer of Israel, had ordained; and all, who had not beheld the former House, built by Solomon's Divine Skill, shouted for Joy.*

This pious Work went on with Success all the Days of *Cyrus*; but in the Reign of *Abasuerus* or *Artaxerxes* (being the same King under two different Names *) the Adversaries of the
Jews,

* See Ezra, iv. 6, 7. The Babylonians called their King *Aba-*

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Jews, who had been placed in different Parts of the Land of *Israel* after the Ten Tribes were carried Captive into *Assyria*, wrote evil-minded Letters to the King of *Persia*, and excited that Monarch through groundless Jealousies, to forbid the Jews to go on with the Building of the Holy City and Temple. Thus this great Work stood still all the Reign of *Artaxerxes*. But when *Darius* came to the *Persian* Throne, the Building was resumed, and the first Royal Decree of *Cyrus* to set forward the Building of the Temple, was established and confirmed by a second Imperial Mandate of *Darius* *. Upon this the Jews renew the Building with an incredible Courage and *Perseverance*: For as their Enemies almost every Moment, interrupted them, using every Stratagem to demolish the Walls of the Holy City and Temple, that brutal Malice could suggest, the Jews opposed to the Malice of their Adversaries, a Diligence and Perseverance well becoming so glorious an Undertaking. For it is recorded (*Nehemiah* IV. 17.) that every Man that was engaged in the Building of the Walls, with one of his Hands wrought in the Work, and

Abasuerus, after his Accession to the Throne, and *Artaxerxes*, was the Appellation generally given him by the Persians. And the Reader need not be told that *Cæsar* was the common Title bestowed upon all the Roman Emperors (at least during twelve successive Reigns) as *Pharaoh* had of old been the Title of all the Kings of *Egypt*.

* *Ezra*, vi. 8.

and with the other Hand held a Weapon, i. e. *of War*, to drive back their Enemies from interrupting the sacred Work. And the People's working with one Hand, and with the other holding a Weapon of War, is a beautiful *Hint* to God's Ministers, intimating, that while they are employed in the immediate Service of God, they are to keep a constant Look-out, lest they be inadvertently surprized by the malicious Attacks of some subtle spiritual Adversary: For the Enemy of Man never fails to set all his *Engines* at Work, and to play off every ruinous Battery against the best of Men, *when* employed in the most important Duties of Religion. But however, the Holy Temple, by a wonderful Hand of Providence, again lifts up his sacred Towers to Heaven; and we may now behold the poor Captive Jews once more restored to the sacred *Hill* of *Sion*, and treading the long wished for Courts of *Jacob's* God.

My next Business then shall be to attend the Conduct of the Jews, after their Restoration to the Holy City, and the Building of the *second* Temple. And it is with equal Degree of Grief and Astonishment, I am forced to observe, that the very *first* Account we hear of this People, after the finishing of the Temple, and keeping of a solemn Pass-

over,

over, is that *curfed* Affinity with the Heathen Nations, which had, as they could not but know, already been the fatal Cause of their late Captivity. And what made this Affinity with the Heathens so highly displeasing to God, was, that by this Means, the Jews ever learned their idolatrous Customs. A sad Instance we have of this in the Jews Profanation of the Sabbath. For as to the Heathen World, it had utterly neglected or forgotten the primary Institution of the Sabbath, in Remembrance of God's resting from the Works of Creation*: And as these idolatrous Nations observed no Days in Reverence to the true God, so, by *their* fatal Example, the People of *Israel* were soon led astray. And to such an Height of Profaneness and Irreverence did the Jews, almost in a Moment arrive, after they were replaced in the Holy Land, that they carried on upon the *Sabbath*, all Kinds of Merchandize, and were not ashamed to be seen in the most servile and common Employments. For upon *Nehemiah's* coming back to *Jerusalem* from the King of *Babylon's* Court, to which, upon the finishing of the Temple, he had been summoned; he finds the Men of *Judah* suddenly fallen away from the Reverence of God and his Holy Sabbaths. *In those Days*, says this Holy Man, *saw † I in Judah, some treading Wine-Presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in Sheaves, and lading Asses, as also Wine,*

* Gen. ii. 3.

† Nehem. xiii. 15.

Wine, Grapes, and Figs, and all Manner of Burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath Day: From this Account of the Jews it appears, I think, very evident, that it is not in the Power of God himself, by any Degree of temporary Punishments, to restrain some Minds from the most outrageous Impiety. For that the Profanation of the Sabbath is such, is abundantly manifest from its being positively commanded, as well as from the great Advantages therefrom arising to true Religion, and consequently to the best Interest of the State. There is such an inseparable Connection between a serious Observance of every national Sabbath, and the temporal Interest and Honour of that Nation, that it is as much the Wisdom and Duty of the State, to encourage and enforce the People to a religious Observance of *one Day* in Seven, as to oblige them to be employed in some useful Calling during the other Six. And to set this Matter in full Light, let it be observed, that it is the greatest Interest, and withal the greatest *Glory* of every State, that all its Members should be as affable, civilized and humane, as the Nature of their different Callings will admit of: And there is nothing in the common Course of Things, so likely to cultivate the Minds of the People, and to prevent them from falling back into those most dangerous of all wild Creatures, *rational Savages*, as the weekly periodical Returns of these

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these sacred Days. For if the Belief of a God, with the many unspeakable Advantages necessarily arising from such a Belief, be the only *lasting* Basis of all Civil Government; if it is not a Thing quite indifferent with the *ruling Powers*, whether the People first be taught to fear their God, that they may, upon the Principles of that Fear and Reverence, *Honour the King*: If it is not all one in the Eyes of the Government whether the People be *idle or industrious, intemperate or sober, rebellious or loyal, profane or religious*, it ought to be the principal Care of every State, to encourage a solemn Observation of the Christian Sabbath; and to put the Laws in strict Execution upon all such as contemptuously profane the sacred Day. For if the *Glory, Honour, and Interest* of the State, depend upon the good Order, Diligence and Sobriety of the People, then it is the Duty of Governors, to countenance and encourage a due Observance of that Day, upon which all *Ranks* of Men have an Opportunity of being instructed in such Precepts of *religious, moral, and social* Duties, without which no Kingdom in the World ever did, or could subsist, much less enjoy any tolerable Degree of Peace and Tranquility at *Home*, or create Respect and Veneration *Abroad*. For even supposing (which without great Irreverence we cannot do) that we were under no Obligations to keep alive the Observance of the Christian Sabbath, on
Account

Account of our Duty to the great Author of Nature, yet it behoves all prudent States, to countenance and encourage these weekly Solemnities, for the Interest, Peace and Prosperity of the *secular* Powers. For as Religion and *good* Government are too closely connected to exist separately, so both the Church and State would (in the very Nature of Things) tumble down together, should the Christian Sabbaths ever become totally ridiculed and despised. And of such infinite Importance to the Prosperity of the State, did a regular and solemn Observance of the Lord's Day appear to one of the *greatest* of Princes, * that he did

* *Constantine* the Great, of whom it is related by *Eusebius*, that “*Diem Dominicum et Parasceves diem colendum esse lege mandârit : Et Legiones Gentiles in Dominicis precari voluerit, usque formulam Precationis præscripserit ; et earum arma signaculo Crucis Christi consignarit : festos autem Paschatos Dies singulari animi devotione celebrârit.*” Nor did *Constantine* issue out imperial Mandates as only so many dead Statutes, or merely for the Observance of his Subjects, but this great Prince enforced every Mandate by his own Royal Example ; Devotion was not ashamed to appear in the Palace of *Constantine* : “*Aula ipsius instar Ecclesiæ cujusdam fuit, in qua et preces habebantur, et Scriptura sacra recitabatur.*” It is not unworthy to be remarked from the exalted Piety of this Great Man, that *Devotion* and *State* Policy are not so absolutely incompatible as some venomous Insects have frequently buzzed in the *Royal Ear*, to the no small Reproach of *King's Courts*, and Decay of National Piety. But as *Constantine* excelled in Piety, he was likewise superior to most other Princes in the true Maxims of Government, for his first Rule was to make an Alliance with the King of Heaven. And *Eusebius* tells

did not think his Throne secure, till he had issued out his imperial Mandate, commanding all his Subjects to observe the Christian Sabbath, with a Solemnity *becoming* the sacred Day. The Interest of the State is founded in the sound Morals and Industry of the People; the Morals and good Conduct of the People, in a great Measure, depend upon having an Opportunity, *once a Week*, to hear the Duties of pure Religion and sound Morality, read, explained, and earnestly recommended to their most serious Regard. It is upon these sacred Days, that the *unlearned* People are taught, and the *learned* reminded to love one another, to *fear God and to honour the King*. It is then that Men are, by the only Word of *Infallibility*, commanded to be *subject to the higher Powers, not only for Wrath* (that Principle of Fear and Necessity) *but for Conscience sake*. Then are read those sublime *Ethics*, and prudent Rules of good Oeconomy dictated by the Divine Spirit, and expressed by the *unparalleled* Eloquence of *Solomon*, in his excellent Proverbs and royal Lectures. Here the common People have free and open Admittance into the *Schools* of Heavenly Science, and all Degrees of Men have the Gospel preached

tells us, of this illustrious Prince, that he far excelled these renowned Names, *Cyrus* and *Alexander*; "*Gloriosior fuit Cyrus, si gloriosam hujus ignominiosam illius mortem; Major Alexandro magno, si subactos Populos, si filios Hæredes, si mansuetum imperium spectes.* *Medull. Theol. Ab. Scult. (Pars Tert. p. 126.)*

preached and explained unto them. And as the Observance of some *certain* stated Day, is absolutely necessary to the very Existence of both Church and State; (the Submission, Duty, Usefulness, and good Behaviour of Inferiors, depending so much upon this Day's Solemnity) I cease to wonder at the *pious Zeal* of *Nehemiah*, for *contending with the Princes and Nobles of Judah*, for their gross Profanation of the Jewish Sabbath, which Profanation was as *foolish* and *impolitic* in the *Nobles*, as it was impious and vile in itself. *Impolitic*, because this Neglect of the Sabbath would, of Course, introduce Anarchy, Confusion, and Ruin into the State, in the Prosperity of which *that* of the Nobles was so nearly united: And that this Violation of the Sabbath was notoriously impious, and unpardonable in the Jews at that Time, is but too evident: The Impiety of this Profanation is manifest from those many solemn *Repetitions* the People had given them, *to remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy*. Nor did God think the Table of Duties relating to himself perfect, till he had crowned the sacred Sculpture with that *solemn Command*, *Keep holy the Sabbath Day*.

And I confess those preceeding Commandments, which prohibit Idol Worship, and taking in *vain* the tremendous *Name*, would have answered but little End, unless some certain stated Day had been expressly set apart, for the constant *Rebearfing* of these Commands,

as well as for praising and adoring the great Author of Nature. And that this Profanation of the Sabbath was at that Time an unpardonable Crime, is very manifest, because they were but just returned from *Babylon*, to which Place they had been led Captives, for that very Crime, the profaning of the Sabbath, with the other dark Train of Impieties consequent thereupon. This the Jews could not but know, because there were many living, who had seen the first Temple in all its Glory: Who had heard the Prophets threaten its Destruction and that of the People's, for their shocking Impieties, especially that Sin of profaning the Sabbath; openly foretelling them, that if they did not forsake these Abominations, the whole Land should be led away into miserable Captivity. This Prediction of the Prophets the Jews had seen punctually fulfilled, and by their own sad Experience had felt that Stroke of Divine Wrath which had been so often foretold, but so *little* regarded. And for the Jews to offend again in the very *same* Thing, and after God had raised up *Cyrus* to release them from Bondage, and had given them Favour in the Sight of the Kings of *Persia*, thereby to enable them to build a *second* Temple in *Jerusalem*, and to have that greatest of all Blessings, publick Divine Service, restored to them once more in the Courts of *Jacob's* God; for, Men, I say, under these Circumstances, to forsake at once

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the Rock of their Salvation, to profane his *Sabbaths*, defy his *Vengeance*, abuse his *Goodness*, and cast all his Laws behind them, is an unanswerable Argument, that some Men are not to be restrained from Vice, by any *temporary* Punishments. And it is this invincible Impiety which forces God, in spite of his Mercy, to have Recourse to that dreadful *Expedient* of future Eternal Punishments. For what other Method could God try with the Jews? He had even courted them to Obedience by the most tender Expressions of Love and Compassion; he had, Time after Time, showered down upon his People the greatest Riches of his Bounties, to see if he could win them by temporal Blessings. When they ungratefully kicked at these, his Vengeance then steps in; while the Rod of *this* lay heavy upon them, they think, repent, and call upon God: God hears them in a *Moment*, withdraws his Punishments, and restores his People again to Peace and Prosperity; and again the People fall off as usual: For no sooner was the *second* Temple finished, but they pollute the *Sabbaths* as formerly, though this Crime had already ruined the Land of *Judah*, and they *knew* it too. And therefore we may depend upon this as *Fact*, that as the Breach of the Sabbath with its consequent Mischiefs, ruined the Land of *Judah*, it will, wherever the like Crime prevails, bring on Destruction to every other Kingdom.

And

And should we ever live in such unhappy Times, as to see the Christian Sabbath turned into a Day of *Pleasure, Gaming, Business, Travelling*, and every other Worldly Pursuit, I dare be bold to foretel, *without the Gift of Prophecy*, that the Ruin of such a Land, cannot, without a *speedy Reformation*, be at any great Distance.

This was the very Case with the stubborn Jews, and can other Nations, if they fall into the like Crimes, expect a more favourable Sentence? Let us hear what God himself has said upon this Subject: *Lo! says he, I begin to bring Evil upon the City which is called by my Name, and should ye be utterly unpunished? Ye shall not be unpunished; for I will call for a Sword upon all the Inhabitants of the Earth, saith the Lord of Hosts.*

It is very evident, that the foregoing Words of *Jeremiah*, are a prophetic Denunciation of God's Vengeance * upon all Nations, which should not take Warning by the Jewish Story. For as the fearful Calamities which befel the Jews, were purposely recorded for the Admonition of all future Ages, so every Nation un-

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der

* These prophetic Denunciations of God's Vengeance upon *national* Impiety, have been too sadly verified already, upon several of those Kingdoms mentioned by the Prophet; which is, I think, an undeniable Proof that all other profane and incorrigible Nations will, sooner or later, share the same Fate, and be made to drink of that *Cup of Fury*, which provoked Omnipotence has solemnly declared, *shall be poured out upon every impious Nation under Heaven.* See Jer. xxv. 15.

der Heaven which is guilty of Jewish Stubbornness, must expect the like or greater Judgments. The Crime which hastened the Destruction of the Land of *Palestine*, was the *Profanation* of the Sabbath. The *Nobles* of *Judah* had, with the most impious Wantonness defecrated the Sabbaths of the Lord, and by their malignant Example, encouraged the Common People to an utter *Contempt* of the sacred Day.

Whether this *Contempt* of the Sabbath, by turning it into a Day of Traffic and servile Labour, can be charged upon any Christian Nation, I shall not take upon me to affirm: But that the Nobles and Quality of *Britain* pay no very *scrupulous* Regard to the solemn Observance of the Lord's Day, is a melancholy Fact, too notorious for the most *fulsom* Adulation either to deny or to vindicate. And the only Difference between the Conduct of the Nobles of *Judah*, and the Quality of *Britain*, with Regard to the Sabbath, seems to be this, that what the one did formerly under a *false* Pretence of Necessity, the other now practises through a Kind of Wantonness and daring Impiety *. Where these shocking Enormities

* A Report is spread abroad, though one can hardly give Credit to it, that there is a Nation in *Christendom*, (and what makes it more astonishing, said to be of the reformed Church) where Numbers of the Quality encourage Gaming, Routs, Masquerades, &c. upon their National Sabbath: And that others, who do not yet chime in

normities in profaning the Christian Sabbath will end, Infinite *Wisdom* alone can tell, and Infinite *Mercy* alone can pardon.

S E C T. V.

AS therefore it appears from the foregoing Section, that the Jews, upon their Releasement from *Babylon*, soon forgot the bounteous Author of their Deliverance, and, after the Building of the Second Temple, relapsed into every shocking Enormity, there does not seem to be any *golden Hopes* of much better Conduct for the future. And upon this Account, I shall not weary the Reader or myself with tracing the History of this stiff-necked People much longer : For in the Jewish *Story* we have had so many flagrant Specimens of the unconquerable Perverseness of some Sinners, that we may be glad to shorten our Survey, and to hasten to that glorious Period when the great RESTORER of fallen Man, came to rectify and heal the piteous Maladies of lapsed Nature. Besides, as I am already got very near the

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End

in with this *fashionable* Profaneness, are nevertheless so averse to a *solemn* Observation of the Sabbath, that they purposely set it apart for a Day of Visits, Travelling, and every other thoughtless Method of murdering the sacred Festival. “*Damnosa quid non imminit dies? Ætas Parentum pejor avis tulit nos nequiores*” --- Here I hope in Providence the Climax of National Impieties will stop ; for should our unhappy Offspring outstride their *Parents* in gigantic Enormities, *Tremble Britain* at the direful Consequence.

End of that Part of the Jewish History which God thought fit to transmit to future Ages, it may not be altogether so safe to lead my Reader too far in the dark Path of mere Conjecture.

However, the Conduct of the Jews, as far as we can form any certain Judgment, was so extremely unpardonable, their Provocations so great, and so often wilfully repeated, even in Contempt of God's Vengeance, that their invincible Perverseness, *at last*, quite tired out the Long-suffering of Providence: Nor did Heaven deign for the future, to leave one *single Event* of this incorrigible People upon Divine Record. The Jews had not one Prophet from the Death of *Malachi*, till the Time of *John the Baptist*, the great Harbinger of God's Anointed. They had not one single Messenger from Heaven, all that gloomy Period, to instruct, animate and comfort them, as *usual*. All the Affairs of this People are left in Darkness and Confusion, from the Death of *Nebemiah*, the last of the inspired Writers of the Jewish History, till the Approach of the Christian Æra. For though all the Books of the Prophets, as well as the Book of *Job*, the *Psalms*, the *Proverbs*, the *Royal Preacher*, and the *Song of Solomon*, are placed in the *sacred Code* after the Book of *Nebemiah*, yet *Nebemiah* lived down in later Times than any of those inspired Penmen, except the three last of the Prophets, *Haggai*, *Zachariah* and *Malachi*.

Malachi. These indeed, were all Contemporary with *Nebemiah*; but still there is not one historical Fact relating to the Jews, in the inspired Writings of later *Date*, than those recorded by *Nebemiah*; and he appears to have survived all the Prophets, and other inspired Writers, unless *Malachi*. *Nebemiah* was one of those *Heads* of Houses, who returned to *Jerusalem* after the *Babylonish* Captivity: He had a principal Hand in the Building of the Second Temple, he lived to see it finished; he was *Tirshatha*, or Governor of the People; and reformed those gross Abuses which, by their Affinity with the Heathens, they fell into after the Building of the Second Temple: Nor was there any one inspired Writer of the old Testament who out-lived this Holy Man, but the Prophet *Malachi* only. *Malachi* lived in the Decline of *Nebemiah's* Life, and survived him, as is plain from his threatening the People for those Crimes which they had relapsed into after the Death of *Nebemiah*. (*Mal. II.*) As therefore with *Nebemiah*, the *inspired* History of the Jews ends, (saving the little Sketch glanced at by *Malachi*, the last Prophet, as well as the last inspired Writer of the first Covenant) we cannot expect any very authentic Memoirs or Records of the Jews, from the Death of *Nebemiah* and *Malachi*, till the Christian Æra, which was, according to *Salian*, Four Hundred and Twenty-four Years, but

Spanheim

Spanheim the younger, makes it many Years more*.

The Jewish History then, from the Death of *Nebemiah*, is very dark and obscure: The Accounts we have of this People are liable to many Objections; and whatever Relations we meet with, after the Death of *Nebemiah*, and the Extinction of the Persian Empire in *Darius Codomannus*, come through very suspicious Hands. *Josephus* deals rather too much in the *Marvellous*; *Judas Maccabeus* seems to be over-partial to his own Nation; and the Account

* According to the Calculation of *Spanheim*, it was from the First Year of the Reign of *Cyrus* to the Christian Æra, 535 Years, from which subtract 60 (it being thereabouts, as near as I can collect, from laying the Foundation of the second Temple, to the silencing of the Prophets) and the Remainder will be 475. And that the *English* Reader, whose Information I have principally in View, may form a better Idea of those many great Events that have happened since the Creation of this lower World, to his own Times, I will present him with some of the most interesting ones, in the following Chronological Compendium.

	Years
From the Creation, to the Death of <i>Adam</i> , ———	930
From the Death of <i>Adam</i> , to the Flood, ———	726
From <i>Noah's</i> Flood, to the Birth of <i>Isaac</i> , ———	452
From the Birth of <i>Isaac</i> , to the Departure of the <i>Israelites</i> out of <i>Egypt</i> , ———	400
From this memorable Event, to the Expiration of the Civil Power under the <i>Hebrew</i> Judges, ———	396
From hence, to the falling off of the Ten Tribes to <i>Jeroboam</i> , and the Division of the Land of <i>Palestine</i> into Two Kingdoms, ———	120
	From

count given by *Tacitus* is too short, as well as too much in the contrary Extreme. But however, it is on all Hands evident; that the Jews were all along so far consistent with their own Character, as never to learn Wisdom but in the *School* of Adversity. When in deep Distress, they could see the Folly of their Impieties, and were then, rather through Fear and Self-Interest, than out of any Principle of Religion, tolerably serious for a while. But yet, whenever they had Respite from those Calamities which their own Folly had called down upon them, they fell at once into the deep Lethargy of stupid Forgetfulness: They in a Moment forgot Calamities but just removed, and the merciful *Hand* that removed them. Of this unhappy

From thence, to the first Captivity of *Jerusalem*, in the Reign of *Jehoiachin*, _____ 375

From this *tragic* Calamity, to the End of the *Babylonian* Captivity, and the Beginning of the *Persian* Monarchy under *Cyrus*, _____ 70

From thence, to the *Nativity* of Christ, _____ 535

From thence, to the Council of *Nice*, convened by *Constantine* the Great, _____ 325

From this famous Synod, to the Council of *Chalcedon*, _____ 126

From thence, to *Boniface* III. deemed by Divines the first Antichrist, _____ 155

From Pope *Boniface* III. to *Gregory*, alias *Hildebrand*, _____ 467

From Pope *Gregory*, to the happy Dawn of the Reformation by *Luther* and *Zwinglius*, (Anno Dom. 1517.) — 444

From this *Auspicious* *Ara*, to the glorious Stand of the *French* Parliament against Ecclesiastic Bigotry and furious Zealots, _____ 237

From the Creation, to this present Year, *Apr. 3. 1753.* 5759

unhappy Conduct of the Jews, we have had too many sad Instances already: And from what *Malachi*, the last of their Prophets, taxes these Men with, there appears but small Hopes of a future Amendment; or that this incorrigible People would behave with a more steady Obedience to the Laws of *Jacob's* God, after all open Visions, repeated Revelations, immediate Messengers from Heaven, and the daily Admonitions of their commissioned Prophets were to be utterly withdrawn, than while they enjoyed these *supernatural* Advantages, and lived, as it were, in the *Commonwealth of Heaven*, and under the particular Inspection of the Almighty. But all these noble Privileges are now no more: The Jews, so often favoured of old, with the Conversation of inspired Prophets, the Visits of Angels, the Voice of God, and the glorious Majesty of the Divine Effulgence, visibly displayed around their Habitations, are for the future to be left wholly to themselves: The familiar Intercourse of Heaven was at an utter End, and the *loving* Messages and *friendly* Ministrations of Angels, were, from the Days of *Malachi* to the Birth of Christ, no more to be expected. The Jews, as a Punishment of their Spiritual Blindness, and ungrateful Abuse of all those glorious Privileges, were, for the future, to be deprived of them all: For it does not appear, from any authentic History of the Jews, that they had either one national Prophet, or public inspired Preach-

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er, from the Death of *Malachi*, till the Preaching of *John the Baptist*, that great Harbinger of the Gospel, foretold many Ages ago by *Isaiab* (Chap. XL. 3.) under the following Character ; *The Voice of him that crieth in the Wilderness, Prepare ye the Way of the Lord, make strait in the Desert a Highway for our God.* And forasmuch as the Jews had been invincibly rebellious to the Laws of God, in spite of the *loving* Admonitions, as well as Threatnings of all the Prophets and Messengers of Heaven ; they were, during the long *gloomy* Period of Five Hundred Years, to be left to themselves, and not to hear the *cheering* Voice of one Prophet more. And it may not be altogether foreign to my Subject, to inquire how far the Jews deserved this Treatment ; which *Inquiry* may help us to vindicate the Wisdom and Goodness of God in this particular Proceedure. As to this Inquiry, we need only look back to the Conduct of these Men in every former Age, and under each different Plan of their Civil Oeconomy. The first of these Plans was the *Patriarchate*, that Model of Government, where every distinct House was governed by its *own Head* ; who was, for the most Part, both King and Priest in his own Family. And though this Plan of Government seems, at least in the *Nonage* and Infancy of Time and Things, to be most simple and equitable, as justly founded on the Nature of Things, yet the Perverseness and Pride of

of Human Nature soon broke in upon this wise original Plan of Patriarchal Rule.

And even in those early, and as one might expect, less *ambitious* Times, the Children soon grew weary of paternal Restraint, and laughed at the wise *Maxims* of grey Hairs. Well, next to this *easy* Form of Government, which Nature, and the Fitness of Things so plainly chalked out, God, the common Parent of all, was pleased to take the Government of one Part of the World into his own Hands; intimating thereby, if I mistake not, that none but the great universal Father of all Flesh, has a Right to break in upon the Patriarchal Form of Government. But even after God vouchsafed to take the whole Dominion of one *selected* People into his own Hands, and was graciously pleased to interpose in every important Event, both in Church and State, in a most visible Manner; yet neither this visible Display of God's Goodness, or his Justice, could keep some refractory, and outrageous Spirits from *contemptuous* Rebellion against the King of Heaven. As to the Justice and Vengeance of God upon atrocious Offenders, some called it *Rigour*, some *laughed* at it, and others *despised* it. And even with regard to the *adorable* Goodness and Long-suffering of the Almighty, ever meant for an Argument to lead all ingenuous Minds to Repentance, yet this *Favourite* Trial of Heaven, generally hardened more than it reclaimed.

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To be convinced of this disagreeable Truth, we need only view the Conduct of *Israel*, during that Forty Years Theocracy in the Wilderness, while God was pleased to sit at the Helm of Affairs, in visible Display of Majesty and Glory. Some amongst the People could not be restrained from the most abominable Impieties even then: For neither the peaceable Banner of Mercy, nor the angry Sword of Vengeance, visibly displayed a Thousand Times over, could keep the People from abusing the *one*, and daring the *other*. This then being the Case, God withdrew his immediate Interposition and visible Residence in *Jacob*. Next to the Theocracy, the People were put, as we have observed in the Progress of * this Subject, under the Administration of their Judges, and the Government reduced to a Kind of Divine Republick, with God at the Helm, and interposing upon any great and extraordinary Occasions. But neither could this Plan of Government satisfy that discontented People; much less could it keep them from rebelling against God, or from intestine Wars and Bloodshed amongst one another; a Crime, which, under the Theocracy, they never dared † to be guilty of. The Govern-
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* See Book III. Sect. I.

† *Dathan, Abiram, &c.* did indeed endeavour to sow Sedition in the State, and Schism in the Church (See Book II. Sect. V.) but these Men were soon taught what it was for Dust and Ashes to rebel, when under the immediate Government of the Almighty.

ment and wise Administration of the Judges, the Children of *Israel*, in the Days of *Samuel*, grew utterly tired of; and (as has been shewn in a former Section of this History) wanted a King to reign over them, in Imitation of the Heathen Nations round about them. To this Change of Government, God, for their *Trial*, consents: Under a Kingly Government therefore the Jews lived many Ages. But how ungratefully they behaved to the great Rock of their Salvation, and how often they abused his Long-suffering, and defied his Vengeance, let the History of those Times, and the Books of the Chronicles of the Kings of *Judah* and *Israel*, testify. For so incredibly hardened and stupid did the Jews, many of them, still remain, after all those various *Trials* of Heaven to open their Eyes, that their *Priests themselves* were so infatuated, as to broach for a *Maxim of Theology*, this horrid and blasphemous Opinion, *He that doth Evil is Good * in the Sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in him.* And since these Men reasoned thus impiously upon God's Mercy and Long-suffering, as they were so stupidly sunk in Error and Delusion, as to infer that because God, in great Compassion to Sinners, did not cut them off in a Moment, but gave them a long and merciful Space for Repentance, as the Jews were not ashamed to confront God's Prophets with such outrageous Blasphemy, e-

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* Malachi xii. 17.

ven defending their Sins upon that diabolical *Principle* of God's delighting in Sinners, how can we blame the Almighty, for depriving them of the Admonitions, and friendly Warnings of Angels and inspired Prophets, and leaving them for the future, to the ordinary Methods of Instruction and Conviction? As it is evident therefore, that the Jews, for their invincible Perverseness, under every supernatural Method of Conviction, well deserved to be deprived of such *glorious* Privileges, I will now endeavour to vindicate the Wisdom and Goodness of the Divine Being in this Proceedure. But it is high Time for me to own, that for *Man* to call the Wisdom and Goodness of his Maker at all in Question, is no very pardonable Undertaking, because the most acute and long-sighted Creature cannot see to the *End* of God's Plan: Nay, and very few are those Links in the Chain of infinite *Design*, which poor Mortals are able to ken from that *little, narrow, contracted Circle*, in which at present we so heavily move. And with relation to every Attempt at vindicating the Wisdom of the Divine Proceedure, I often think, that *even this*, is a Kind of blameable Officiousness; and that for short-sighted Man to pretend to scan the Depths of Providence, and to bring down the towering *Heights* of infinite Wisdom to the *level* of Human Understanding, is a Task, for the most Part, as vainly officious, as it is difficult and hazardous;

or, at the Best, Attempts of this Nature are but like so many pious Impertinences. This however, I hope may be alledged in Favour of every *well-meant* Endeavourer to vindicate the Ways of God to Man, that the Divine Being beholds his Creatures who are thus employed, with, at least, a Kind of fatherly Pity, while he looks down with *severe* Indignation at the impious Assurance of those half-read *Witlings*, who take upon them to arraign infinite Wisdom, and infinite Goodness, impeaching the one of Irregularity in the *natural*, and the other of Rigour in the *moral* World. And as this Consideration has made me all along tread with cautious Reverence upon every foot of sacred Ground, so I hope the great Father of Mercies will pardon my *well-meant* Essays, in explaining, and vindicating the Divine Proceedure in his various Trials upon Human Nature, from the first Formation of Man, to that gloomy Period the Cessation of the Prophets, and other inspired Writers of the first Covenant. To come therefore to the Point in Hand, (*viz.*) to vindicate the Wisdom and Goodness of the Divine Being, for depriving the Jews, at last, of all supernatural Means, and leaving them, from the Death of *Malachi* till the Christian *Æra*, to the ordinary Methods of Instruction, &c. Now I think one, and perhaps the greatest Vindication of this particular Proceedure of Providence, in depriving the Jews, and at that particular

ticular Juncture, of all supernatural Methods
 of Instruction, was their *repeated* Abuse of
 these glorious Privileges, which has so fla-
 grantly appeared throughout the whole Jewish
Story. For it is no more than what is strictly
 agreeable to the Nature of Things, as well as
 to that *inherent* Right of the Divine Bene-
 factor, to withhold his Gifts, after his Creatures,
 a Thousand Times over, neglect and abuse them
 with a contemptuous Air of haughty *Disdain*.
 That this was the ungrateful and impious Abuse
 which the Jews all along ran into, the Reader
 can now be no Stranger to: And for this Reason,
 the Jews full well deserved to be deprived of all
 those mighty Privileges, which they had so of-
 ten abused to their own still greater and great-
 er Condemnation. And their being deprived of
 every supernatural Method of Conviction up-
 on the Death of *Malachi*, and the Extinction
 of the Persian Empire in *Darius Codomannus*,
 seems to carry very strong Marks of infinite
Design. For that the Jews really deserved to
 be deprived of all supernatural Means *one Time*
or other, can be no Matter of Debate. This
 was no more than a dreadful *Catastrophe* which
 all thinking People foresaw must be the Case
 sooner or later. And there does not, upon
 close Attention to the Conduct of the Jews,
 appear to have been any other single Period of
 Time, in which they more deserved this In-
 stance of God's Displeasure, or in which the
 Wisdom and Goodness of the Divine Being

would have been so visibly displayed. For though it would be sufficient to say *that* particular Period was the most proper, because infinite Wisdom made Choice of it, yet I well know this *Way* of arguing, though in itself as rational, as it is pious, will not satisfy a disputatious Humour. But when it appears, upon due Examination of sacred History, that that the Jews never so much deserved it in any other Age, and that the various great *Ends* which Providence had in View, could not have been so well answered at any other particular *stated Time*, then, I presume, the Vanity and Pride of the *captious* Disputant will acquiesce, and acknowledge the Wisdom and Goodness of God in that Proceedure. Now that the Jews, in any other Age, never so greatly deserved to be deprived of all supernatural Methods of Conversion, as at that very Period when they *were* so deprived, is evident from their shocking Contempt of the Predictions of their Prophets, in spite of the many experienced Proofs of the Truth and fulfilling of those Predictions. And they had so recent, and such an *affecting* Proof of the Truth of those Predictions of God's Judgments upon impenitent Sinners, in the Babylonian Captivity, and still ran into those Crimes again, which were the Cause of that Captivity, and despised the inspired Lectures of their Prophets, almost the Moment they were released, that had God, in Mercy, vouchsafed

to repeat those supernatural Means ever so long, it would have answered no other End than to harden the Jews, and consequently would have rendered their Condemnation heavier, because their Crime would have been greater. It was therefore high Time to do what had been often foretold, but as often slighted: Had God deferred this Punishment longer, his Wisdom might have been called in Question, or had he done it sooner, some Men might have impeached his Goodness. For if these supernatural Methods had been withheld before the Captivity, that *adorable Instance* of God's Readiness, to try every possible Method for the eternal Welfare of his People, would never have been given. And if the Jews had *not* been led Captive, nor felt the heavy Yoke of Heathen Tyranny, before they were utterly dispersed amongst all Nations, neither their invincible Perverseness, nor the Justice of the Divine Being, in at last leaving them wholly to the more ordinary Methods of Conviction, would have appeared in so *full* a Point of Light. And farther, if the Almighty had forsaken his People *during* the Babylonian Captivity, had Heaven sternly frowned upon the Jews when groaning under Heathen Bondage, and not vouchsafed one Divine Counsellor, or inspired Prophet, to revive their languishing *Hopes*, by the rapturous Promise of being again restored to the sacred Hill of *Sion*, that fair Place which was the Joy of all the

Earth; had, I say, all the Prophets been silenced at that gloomy Period, and the People wholly deprived of every sweet consolatory Expectation of future Release, they might have been driven under this tragical Horror, blackened by Barbarian Insult, to curse the Hand that afflicted them, though this Affliction was meant to pave the Way to *an eternal Weight of Glory*. For if the Jews, while groaning under Fetters of Iron, had not been solaced by *one* inspired and welcome Messenger, the Babylon Tragedy might have left upon Record a dreadful *Pattern* of Desperation under the kind afflicting Hand of Providence, and would have been quoted, as a dangerous *Precedent* under all national Calamities in future Ages. But instead of this gloomy Picture of Despair under the correcting Hand of Divine Vengeance, the Conduct of the Jews, when bending under the Load of Babylonian Miseries, gave Birth to the most deep and affecting Elogy that the World ever beheld. And that sacred Piece which bears the Title of the *Lamentations* of *Jeremiah*, is such a moving Picture of deep Repentance and unfeigned Humiliation, under the Weight of national Calamities, as is not to be met with in the History of any other People under Heaven. For Grief, in this sacred Tragedy, is represented in the most mournful Habit of a weeping, disconsolate Widow: And in such pompous, but withal unaffected Sorrow,

Sorrow, does this forlorn Widow, the City of *Jerusalem*, sit, bitterly bewailing her Guilt, and her well deserved Misery, that this striking Piece is a true Pattern of deep national Mourning, and thrice happy will it be, if our own Nation may never have Occasion to repeat this dolorous Elogy, in some *future* Tragedy, where, not the Land of *Assyria*, but BRITAIN may ere long be the dreadful Scene, unless prevented by a *national* Reformation. But however, to wave these *unpopular* Reflections, let us at present turn our Attention to the Jewish Story, from whence it does not appear, that this stiff-necked People ever so well deserved to be deprived of the Lectures of their venerable Teachers, at any other *stated* Period, as at *that* when this memorable Event did happen.

Had this happened in any Age before the Babylonian Captivity, then this Trial to open the Eyes of the People, by Slavery and Bondage in an Enemies Country, had never been made, because this would have been a kind of weaker Argument, and trying to reclaim the Jews by a less Punishment, when even a greater had been to no Purpose. For, dreadful as the Calamity of the Babylonian Captivity was, yet what was this to God's silencing the Prophets, and leaving the Men of *Israel* to their own treacherous Deceivings? For what can Imagination paint so dark and gloomy, as for a People who, *ever since* it became a Na-

tion, had been highly favoured with a Succession of inspired Preachers, with the Visits of Angels, the Voice of God, and a Thousand other supernatural Means, to be wholly deprived of all those glorious Benefits in one Day? This Silence then of the Prophets being a Punishment infinitely greater, and of a more affecting Nature, than any other national Calamity, it would have been a little out of Character, had this great Trial to convert the Jews been first made, and then afterwards to make use of weaker Means, even when the strongest had been to no Purpose. Neither would the Goodness of God have appeared in so amiable a Light, had he thought fit to silence the Prophets during the Peoples miserable Servitude at *Babylon*, for then they most wanted the sweet Consolation of their venerable Instructors, and without which they might (as has been observed) have been cast down into the horrible Pit of *tormenting* Despair.

The Period then in which it was the fittest to leave the Jews to themselves, was immediately after the Building of the second Temple: It was *then* they most deserved to be deprived of all supernatural Means, whether by the loving Remonstrances or fearful Predictions of their inspired Teachers, because it was then they so wantonly scoffed at these Predictions of approaching Judgments, in spite of that *recent* Proof of the Truth of what their Prophets had

had foretold them, both relating to the *Babylonian* Captivity, and their Release out of it. These were *Facts* not to be denied, because there were too many living Witnesses to attest them. And after all these convincing Proofs which the Jews had, from Time to Time, experienced of the Divine Commission of their venerable Guides, to hear them confronting *Malachi*, when he called upon them to forsake their Impieties, to hear these Monsters of Profaneness blaspheming in the Face of the good old Prophet in these Words, *Every one that doth Evil is good in the Sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them*; Can we blame the Almighty for depriving them of those noble Benefits, which to the *last* they so impiously abused? And as the Goodness of the Divine Being stands intirely acquitted in this Proceedure, so in this memorable Event, there is a most *adorable* Instance of infinite Wisdom; and not only in Relation to the Jews, but to the whole World in general, and to *Christendom* in particular. And that the Wisdom of the Divine Being might not wholly rest upon the Determination of Human Conjecture in this particular Proceedure, *Malachi*, the last inspired Penman of the Old Testament, has left upon Record a Kind of general Intimation, why the Jews were not for the future, to expect any more Admonitions from *Angels*, *Visions*, or Prophets; which Intimation we have in these Words (*Malachi* IV. 4.) Re-
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member ye the *Law of Moses my Servant*, which I commanded unto him in Horeb, for all Israel, with the *Statutes and Judgments*. The true Import of these Words, which contain the very last and *dying* Injunction of the Old Testament, is this, that since the Jews had all along slighted the Lectures of their Prophets, and set all their Predictions of God's Judgments upon impenitent Sinners, at open Defiance, they were not for the future, to expect any *previous* merciful Warnings of approaching Vengeance, in Case of outrageous national Impiety, nor any other Means of Instruction and Conviction, than what were contained in that written *Digest*, which God was pleased to divulge in *Horeb* unto the great Jewish Lawgiver; that he might teach the People *all the Law, the Statutes and the Judgments*, which were contained in, or connected with the *Sinai* Covenant. What an adorable Display do we here behold of Judgment softened with Mercy? For notwithstanding the Jews had even forced the Almighty to withhold every supernatural Means of Instruction, and as it were to draw a black dismal *Curtain* between the Eyes of this perverse People and the *cheering* Light of Heaven, still they are left in full and ample Possession of that *Divine Law* which was penned from the Mouth of God. So that they had still a peculiar Advantage above all other Nations under Heaven, who were left, in a great Measure, to the unassisted Light of Reason.

Reason. And in this Proceedure of Heaven towards the Jews, we may learn, that God limits Mercy by *just* Judgment, and tempers Judgment with *interposing* Mercy. For had the Almighty deprived the Jews of the Book of the Law, as well as silenced all the Prophets at once, this Sentence, though, on the Part of the perverse Jews, well deserved, might have appeared too rigorous and severe. Or had Heaven continued its familiar Intercourses, by Angels, Visions, and inspired Prophets, any longer, the Jews repeated Contempt of these glorious Privileges would have been the same as in every former Age; and consequently, their Condemnation would have been greater, in Proportion as these Divine Favours had been longer continued. So that Heaven tempered Mercy and Judgment, in withholding all supernatural Gifts, with such Divine Art, that it is difficult to say positively, on which Side Mercy would have lain, whether in continuing to the Jews their wonted supernatural Gifts, or at last wholly depriving them of all. I, for my own Part, think this *last* was the greater Act of Mercy, because there was no Sort of Probability that had these extraordinary Gifts been continued ever so long, the Jews would have made one Jot the more grateful Use of them, than they had done for so many Ages before. And when any People persist in a repeated and *contemptuous* Abuse of any supernatural Gifts, it is not only *strict* Justice, but even the greatest

est Act of Divine Mercy, to withhold those Gifts; because the *longer* they are continued, the *longer* perverse Minds are apt to abuse them; and the *longer* Men ungratefully abuse any Divine Favours, the greater is the Crime, and more certain will be the Punishment of such *deliberate* Impiety. Hitherto then the Divine Wisdom was visibly displayed in Regard to his Proceedure with the Jews, and as the withholding all supernatural Gifts related to that *particular People*: But then the wise Designs of Providence were not to rest there only; God had the Interest of all future Ages in *View*: And by depriving the ungrateful Jews of all supernatural Means of Conviction, God signified, that he never would make these glorious Endowments so cheap and common for the future, as to render them contemptible. The Grand Design of withholding these supernatural Means did indeed principally, and immediately concern the Jews, the People so deprived; but this memorable Event related to all other Nations in general. First to the Jews: For when this People is assured that no other Methods of Instruction would be vouchsafed for the future, but what were prescribed in the Law of *Moses*, it would naturally induce every serious Man to a close and attentive Study of the *whole* Divine Law. For since that was to be their only Guide and supreme *Directory*, in all Matters, whether Civil or Religious, they would see, from thence, the absolute Necessity

ty of carefully preserving this inspired *System* of Ecclesiastical and Civil Polity. And indeed, so laudable was the Zeal of the Jews in preserving the Divine Code pure and unmixed, that notwithstanding their gross Mistakes relating to the *moral* Law, and their *false* Constructions of the Predictions contained in those Oracles of God, still they ever preserved the *whole* Law as it was first delivered, and, with the most indefatigable Diligence, faithfully copied out all the historical, and prophetic Books of the Old Testament. And, in the most perilous Times, they religiously preserved the Divine Code from being cancelled, or obliterated by Barbarian *Malice*. These inspired Works the Jews carefully transmitted down to Posterity, as we now have them. And this laudable Zeal of the Jews, was not only of singular Advantage to themselves, but was wisely meant for the universal Good of all future Ages. For had the Jews been favoured with an uninterrupted Succession of Prophets, and other supernatural Means of Conviction, the Law, as well as the Writings of their Prophets, would, in a little Time, have become *despised* and *neglected*: And had the Law and the Prophets been either in Part lost, or mixed and corrupted with human Inventions, the fatal *Stab* which the divine Authority of the *Gospel* would in this Case have received, the serious Reader need not be told. But here Providence interposed; and that the Jews, to whom

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were * committed the Oracles of God, might be the more faithful *Conservators* of the Treasure of Divine Wisdom, God, by wholly depriving them of all other Means of Instruction, than what the sacred Code laid down, made it every thinking Man's *Interest* as well as Duty, to read, meditate, and preserve inviolably that Book of Heavenly, and every other useful *Science*. And it was upon this *Silence* of the Prophets, and Cessation of every other supernatural Means, that the Jews knew what they had to trust to. They then saw the true *Import* and wise Reason of that Command, *To the † Law and to the Testimony*; for as this was proposed in the Days of *Isaiah*, as an infallible *Test* of all Pretences to Divine Inspiration, and as the best *Criterion* of distinguishing true commissioned Prophets, from *Counterfeits* and *Impostors*, so when the Jews were given to understand, that the Voice of *living* Prophets were no more to be heard in the Land, they would of Course pay a greater Veneration to the inspired Precepts and Predictions of their *departed Teachers*. And as they were recommended in Particular to the Reading and Meditation of the *Horeb* Covenant, that Law, with the Statutes and Judgments, which God commanded unto his Servant *Moses*, so I think it is natural to suppose, that these Sacred Oracles would, from the Cessation of the Prophets, &c. be justly held of such infinite Importance, that

* Epist. Rom. iii. 2.

† Isaiah, viii. 20.

that not a Tribe, a House, or a single Family of any *Note*, would chuse to be without a Copy of the Divine Law. This Veneration for the Writings of the great *Legislator* made it necessary to encrease the Number of *Transcripts*, and these *Transcripts* of the Law being so universally wanted and called for, especially after the Jews were likely to be dispersed among different Nations, encouraged several Men, *well read in the Law*, to write out Copies for the private Use of those who were of Abilities to purchase them. This (considering the Art of PRINTING was then never dreamt of) would, naturally speaking, be the Case, and therefore this great Demand for Copies of the Law, probably gave Birth to that Set of Men called *Scribes*; at first an honourable and most useful Order, though After-Ages give them a different Character. But be this as it will, Copies of the Divine Law were certainly in many Hands; and the wise Reason hereof was, that by that Means the Laws of *Jacob's God*, with the Doctrine of the *Unity*, might be propagated amongst all Nations, whether the Jews should be dispersed. This *Doctrine*, during the Captivity, had been frequently taught at *Babylon*. Upon the Extinction of the Assyrian Empire, the Persians had the *same* Opportunity of being instructed in the Belief and Worship of the true God. This *Doctrine*, when the Persian Empire was subdued by *Alexander the Great*, would spread of Course throughout

out *all* the Regions of *Greece* : And when *Antiochus* afterwards made such dreadful Inroads amongst the Jews, and took so many of them Captives, it is by no Means a forced Conjecture to suppose, that whoever amongst the victorious Army, took Captive one single Jew of any Family, or at least of *any Sense* of Religion, but with his Captive he got that *invaluable* Treasure, the Book of God, and Source of all true Riches. And as this *Multiplicity* of Copies of the Divine Law, was owing to the Jews being wholly deprived of all other Methods of Instruction, the Wisdom of Providence appears in a most *beautiful* Point of Light, in the Silence of the Prophets, and the ceasing of all supernatural Means upon the Extinction of the *Persian Empire*. For had this memorable Event happened in any former Age, God's Goodness in trying every possible Expedient to reclaim the Jews, would not have been, to human Comprehension, so very conspicuous : And if this *Event* had not happened when it did, that is before the Jews were utterly dispersed (upon *Alexander's* Exaltation to the *Grecian* Empire) the Copies of God's *written* Law, could not have been so universally dispersed throughout those vast extensive Regions which this great *Prodigy* of Men subdued. For it was owing to the extensive Victories of *Alexander*, and the Opportunity, in consequence thereof, which all the *letter'd* or *serious* Men in his Retinue had of seeing those

Copies

Copies of the Divine Law (notwithstanding the Bulk of the Army might overlook Things of this Nature) that the *Oracles* of God were handed far abroad to the most *distant* Parts of the World. And of this Law of the *most high* God it may (as of his glorious Luminaries) be affirmed, that *there is no Speech nor Language where the Voice of it has not been heard*. For though this written Law of God was originally revealed for the Direction of the *Jews*, it was still ultimately designed for the Advantage of *all* the World. Nor can we suppose that every other People upon Earth, except the *Jews*, were wholly left to the unassisted Light of lapsed Nature. No, God certainly has not been wanting in his divine Aid and Assistance to *any* People under Heaven. He has, *one time or other*, poured down the Riches of his Grace upon every distinct Nation. The very *Canaanites*, though at last so abandoned, had not been without *repeated* Warnings: *Moab* and *Ammon* had Prophets sent unto them; *Egypt* was more than once tried by supernatural Methods, and had seen the miraculous Displays of God's mighty Power, both to save and to destroy. *Assyria*, *Chaldea*, *Philistine*, and the Children of *Edom*, were not (as might be proved, if it fell within my present Design) so much behind the *Jews*, as is generally imagined. The *Nations* were sent to time after time, and called upon to forsake their abominable Impieties, and to serve the

one true God only. Neither let us suppose that these solemn Calls, *Return, repent, cease to do Evil, learn to do well, live, be eternally happy, &c.* were confined to one Nation only. No, every People under Heaven has been tried (in their Day) with every possible Means of Conviction. When these were to no purpose, God wisely withheld them. This at length became the Fate of the *Jews*: They, for their contemptuous Abuse of all supernatural Means, were at last deprived of them all. And this Punishment, (if so it may properly be called) was wisely designed, in its happy Effects, to spread abroad Copies of the written Law, for the general spiritual Advantage of all Nations under Heaven. And here I cannot forbear observing what a peculiar Advantage *Britain* enjoys, by still having, in *free* and ample Possession, those Oracles of God, which, upon the Cessation of the Prophets, were so religiously preserved by the *pious Jews*. And as the sacred History was meant to be a faithful *Monitor* to all that should read it, there is one most *interesting* Caution naturally deducible from the fatal Catastrophe of the obstinate *Jews*, and it is a Caution which *at present* ought to alarm Christendom not a little, "If God spared not the *natural* Branches, take heed lest He also spare not THEE."

S E C T.

S E C T. VI.

AFTER the *Jews* were apprized that they were not to expect one single inspired Messenger, till the great Harbinger of God's Anointed, stiled by *Malachi*, *Elijah*, (i. e.) a Person like unto *Elijah* for great Abstemiousness, Retirement, and severe Sanctity of Life, the Prophet *Malachi* assures them in his very *last* Sentence, "That if they, or other Nations, after the Appearance of the great Messiah, should still wilfully rebel against God, and trample all his Laws under Foot, nothing in that Case was to be expected but universal Destruction, and a *perpetual* Curse." The Prophet's great Design in recommending the Law of *Moses*, and the solemn Covenant of *Horeb*, to their serious Meditation, was, that by a close Examination of that *sacred* Digest, they might be fully convinced that Obedience was the *End* of that Covenant on *Man's* Part, and on *God's*, Protection of his People, with every other valuable Blessing: But in Case of wilful *malicious* Rebellion against the Laws of Heaven, the Displeasure and Wrath of Heaven, with all the sad Train of Ills consequent thereupon. This was the great Truth, which the serious Meditation of the *covenantial* Law must of course convey to every *sensible* Reader. And the historical Passages in the Books of *Moses* contained so many Examples of God's

punctually fulfilling *his* Part of the *Horeb* Covenant, by bounteously rewarding Obedience to his sacred Laws, and dreadfully punishing all deliberate notorious Crimes, and for the most Part the very Instant the Crimes were committed, that the *thinking* Men amongst the *Jews* must conclude, that as Virtue and Vice were not so remarkably noticed by *temporal* Rewards and Punishments at any other Period as under the Theocracy, there must of necessity be *some* after State, in which Virtue and Vice would meet with that Distinction, which (since the Theocracy) had not been so constantly made; for Reason itself told the *Jews* that God was a Being of an *unchangeable* Nature; and the Books of *Moses* assured them there was *once* a Period, and of forty Years Duration, when God visibly shewed his Approbation of Virtue and Obedience, and as visibly, and even in the very Act, took Vengeance upon every *notorious* Delinquent. What then could the more *sober* *Jews* think of the Matter, when they found this temporal Distinction of Virtue and Vice, by no Means so visible as when (under the Theocracy) God vouchsafed to govern his People with his own immediate Power? God (though Virtue was not at present rewarded, nor Vice always punished) was still the same, his infinite Purity and divine Nature remained unchangeable, and he had, without all Peradventure, the same Approbation of Virtue and Abhorrence of Vice,

as

as when he gave instantaneous Manifestations of both. And as the divine Being had weighty Reasons for so visibly and immediately rewarding Obedience, and punishing Rebellion against his Laws, while the *Jews* lived under the Theocracy, little Doubt can be made but he had many wise Ends to answer by postponing those Rewards and Punishments which are, in the Nature of Things, respectively due to Virtue and Vice. The Reason why God, while the People were under his immediate Dominion, so eminently distinguished between Obedience and Rebellion, was to leave upon Record an Experiment upon human Nature made by *himself* of forty Years Continuance; by which it too visibly appears that some Men may be so stupidly sunk in Error and Delusion, as not to be reclaimed from Vice, tho' the Rod of divine Vengeance is fearfully displayed, and falls down upon impious Delinquents in heavy Displeasure every Time they dare to offend. Besides this Plan of Government under the particular controul of the Almighty, where Obedience was always rewarded with great temporal Felicity, and notorious Crimes punished immediately after they were committed, was giving to all the World an *experimental* Proof, that Virtue and Vice were not, in the *Estimation* of infinite Wisdom, Things of that indifferent Nature, as some self-deluded Men would have them thought. This forty Years Dominion, and

this visible Display of Providence, where Obedience was always crowned with singular Blessings, and the perverse Sinner ever chastized for his Insolence and Folly, is an *Earnest* of that *future* Distinction which will undoubtedly be made in the next World *between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not*: Nor will this different Recompence of Virtue and unrepented Vice be of any less than eternal Duration. For God has given his Creatures to understand, by his not being able, *under the Theocracy*, to suffer the perverse Sinner to escape without immediate Punishment, that he neither will nor can, consistent with his own infinite Purity, ever endure the hardened *Impenitent* to dwell in the Mansions of future Glory. God's Honour and Wisdom were too much effected to suffer one perverse Sinner to escape unpunished, while the People were under the immediate Inspection and Government of Heaven; nor can the pure Regions of Heaven*, for the same Reason, bear one hardened presumptuous Sinner to enter into the sacred Mansions. This, I cannot but think, was what every serious Reader of the Law of *Moses* might easily infer; For when the *Jews* were informed by divine Authority, that there *once* was a *Time*, when God could not bear the notorious *Impenitent* to dwell in his Sight, but punished him even in this Life, they could not well help concluding,

* See Book I. Sect. III.

ing, that when this temporal Punishment of Sinners in a great Measure ceased, it was because infinite Wisdom had reserved this to be the *Business* of a future State, in which the divine Being would no more suffer the impenitent Sinner to dwell in his Sight, than he had done while the People lived under his immediate Government. Neither does it, I think, require any extraordinary Capacity to infer the absolute Necessity of a *future State* of Rewards and Punishments, whenever this respective Distinction between Virtue and Vice is not made in this *present* Life.

Under the Theocracy indeed, while God was visibly supreme in Church and State, and constantly punished all wilful Rebellion against his divine Laws, and rewarded Obedience with some eminent temporal Blessings, there was no Necessity for having such frequent recourse to that powerful Sanction of future eternal Recompence as there afterwards was, when this temporal Distinction between Virtue and Vice was not so manifestly displayed. And this; amongst many others, I apprehend, might be one Reason why the Doctrine of a future *State* of Rewards and Punishments was not so expressly divulged in the Law of *Moses* as by the inspired Prophets in after Ages. The Law carried, in a great Measure, its own Sanctions in its Hand; and by so eminently rewarding Obedience, and so dreadfully punishing all wilful notorious Crimes, almost the very Moment they were committed, it might reason-

ably enough be expected that no other Sanctions would be wanting. And it was, I think, to the Theocracy that the Psalmist's Remark may most aptly, and even literally be applied, (*viz.*) that *in the keeping of God's Laws there is great Reward*. So that under this tremendous Plan of Government, the People were even *tempted* to a regular Obedience to the Laws of *Jacob's God*, by the great Rewards immediately annexed. And where God's Creatures are too stubborn to be courted to Obedience by all the Enjoyments of the greatest temporal Blessings, God then was forced, in spite of divine Mercy, to have recourse to all kinds of temporal Calamities, thereby to try whether Man, out of Self-Love and Tenderness to his own Frame, would not be prevailed upon to obey those righteous Laws, which when kept crowned the Man with immediate Prosperity, but when wilfully broken brought down *swift* Misery and every bitter Calamity. But even all this would not keep human Nature from going wilfully astray: And the Murmurs, the Idolatries and perverse Rebellion of the People of *Israel*, while under the forty Years immediate Government of the divine Being, are too fresh upon the Reader's Memory to need to be repeated. This stubborn Conduct of the *Jews* forced Heaven at last to speak out an *unwelcome* Truth, which, though deducible from the Law, was not mentioned in exprefs Terms. This *awful* Doctrine of future

future eternal Torments, was the great *Mystery* into which, for Reasons best known to infinite Wisdom, the Bulk of the *Jews* was not then *initiated*: This alarming Truth was reserved for the great *Dernier Resort*, as if the Almighty was even loth to exhibit this *Picture* of himself under the terrible Imagery of burning*, irreconcilable Wrath, till forced to it by the perverse Ingratitude of an incorrigible People. And sure it was an Act of the *greatest* Goodness in the divine Being, after his Creatures abused all other Expedients, to apprize them of his final Resolution of punishing them with eternal Misery, if they still continued to defy his Vengeance, and to persist in and die under wilful and unrepented Impieties. For since some Men are not to be reclaimed by any kind of *finite* Expedients, as they abuse God's Mercies, and defy his temporal Punishments, they even drive the Almighty (in Vindication of his righteous Laws) to that *dreadful* Expedient of future eternal Torments. And as the invincible Impiety of the *Jews*, &c. *called down this fearful Death upon themselves*, it was great Compassion in the Almighty to apprize them of it. Had God not done it, the Damned might have had reason to impeach both his Goodness and his Wisdom, in not forewarning his Creatures of that dreadful State

* The more thinking *Jews* however, could not be ignorant of this alarming Truth, they could not but know from several Passages in the divine Book, that *Jacob's* God, when provoked, was a *consuming Fire*.

State of Torments prepared for incorrigible Sinners. But now, since Men are beforehand apprized, what will be the certain Recompence of all *deliberate, presumptuous, and boasted* Vice, they will not have it in their Power to accuse God's Goodness, but instead of that, will *curse* and lament their Folly, for plunging themselves wilfully into the Pit of endless Perdition, when they had been so often called upon to shun and avoid it. This Doctrine therefore of future eternal Torments, which in the Law was not so plainly revealed, began to be gradually divulged by the Prophets in after Times. *Isaiab* long before, and *Daniel* during the *Babylonian* Captivity, proclaimed this Doctrine in very alarming Terms. The Evangelical Prophet paints these future eternal Horrors under the very same Imagery as our Saviour himself, when upon Earth, described them, *Their Worm*, says *Isaiab*, (Chap. LXVI. 24.) *shall not die, neither shall their Fire be quenched; and they shall be an Abhorring unto all Flesh.* And *Daniel* speaks aloud the same dreadful Truth in these Words, (Chap. XII. 2.) *And * many of them that sleep in the Dust of the*

* The learned Reader need not be told that by the πολλοὶ τῶν καθευδόντων ἐν γῆς χώματι, we are to understand all that Sleep in the Dust of the Earth, the whole Multitude of the Dead, (or of them that Sleep) πλῆθος τῶν καθευδόντων. Thus ἡσδὶ πολλοὶ are rendered *the* Multitude of the Isles, *Psalms* xxvii. 1. And in like manner, ἁμαρτωλοὶ οἱ πολλοὶ, includes the whole Race of Men, οἱ πολλοὶ being in this Passage synonymous to πάντες, as is very

the Earth shall awake, some to everlasting Life, and some to Shame and everlasting Contempt. And that this alarming Doctrine might never depart out of the Mind of the *Jews*, the Bible both begins and ends with an awful Declaration of this dreadful Truth. Future eternal Torments is the *first* and *last* Doctrine revealed in the sacred Book; wilful Disobedience and presumptuous unrepented Impiety, are by *Moses* the *first*, and *Malachi* the *last* inspired Writer of the Old Testament, condemned to everlasting Misery. *The Day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*, was the great *Eden Doctrine* revealed to the first of Men; and, *lest I come and smite the Earth with a Curse*, (that is, if the Inhabitants of the World still persisted in hardened Impiety) are the last Words of the Prophet, and the awful *Close* of the *Old Testament*.

For the Curse here denounced does not only imply a temporary, but an eternal Punishment; and though it may relate to the fearful Destruction and Overthrow of the *Jewish Nation* by the *Roman Powers*, yet it not only includes *that* Calamity, but likewise has respect to the final Destruction of the whole World at the *general Judgment*, and the eternal Punishment of all profane impenitent Sinners consequent

very evident from the Context, and from the Antithesis betwixt the first *Man, Adam*, in whom *πᾶσι ἁμαρτία ἐκείνη*, and the *second Adam*, the Man Christ Jesus, in whom *πᾶσι ἐξωποινῇ θήσεται*. See 1 Cor. xv. Rom. iii. 23. v. 18, 19.

sequent thereupon. For that the Curse here denounced signifies an *incurable* Wound, irrecoverable Loss and Destruction, is not mine only, but the Opinion of some of the best Expounders of the sacred Oracles. Nor can I conceive what wise End it could have answered for the Prophet to exhort the People to future Obedience, or *Faith* in the Messiah, when he should appear, by threatening them with *temporal* Calamities only, were these Calamities ever so dreadful and universal, because some of the *Jews*, as the Prophet full well knew, were never to be reclaimed by the greatest *finite* Punishments, but the very Moment these Punishments were over, they, like the stubborn Tyrant of *Egypt*, hardened their Hearts, and sinned *more and more*. And what may, I think, be a farther Argument that the Curse denounced in the last Words of the Bible against all hardened impenitent Men under the Gospel (for it is to Men's Impenitence under the Gospel Covenant that the Curse relates, and includes not the unbelieving *Jews* only, but all impious and unbelieving Christians) is that fearful Experiment made upon human Nature by the Destruction of the Old World*. This was a thousand Times over more alarming and more tragical than the Destruction and Dispersion of the *Jews* by the *Roman* Armies. This Punishment of the old World was so fearful, and so universal, that all the Race of

* See Book I. Sect. VI.

of Mankind, save eight Persons, perished in the hideous Ruin. But even *this Trial* to open the Sinner's Eyes was not effectual with *all*. *Ham*, one of the Eight, who was an Eye-witness of that terrible Judgment, both defied this amazing Vengeance, and ungratefully rebelled against that infinite Mercy which rescued him (base as he was) from the Rage of mighty Waters *: Neither did the visible Marks of this universal Vengeance upon a sinful World deter some Men from running into greater Crimes in after Ages. And if the History of the Deluge, and of the Crimes which called down so unheard of a Judgment, with the many *visible* Ruins of the Earth, loudly proclaiming the Truth of the *Fact* in every future Age; if this fearful Vengeance had been too weak an Argument to prevent the World in general from running into the like or greater Impieties, it would be but a *flat* kind of Argument, and a very *awkward* Climax in the inspired Writings, to threaten an abandoned World with a *less* Punishment, when the Perverseness of human Nature was not to be reclaimed by a Judgment so *infinitely* greater: For that the Punishment of the old World far exceeded, in Horror and Extent †, the Over-throw

* See Book II. Sect. I. where the Crime of *Ham* is particularly described.

† I believe the Universality of the Deluge has, in these later Days, been so demonstrably proved, and by such Variety of Arguments, that most Men would be ashamed to deny it.

throw and Destruction of the *Jews* by the *Romans*, will hardly be debated. And therefore it is very evident that *the Curse* denounced upon impenitent Sinners is the Curse of *eternal* Misery. Thus far therefore, even from the Writings of *Moses* and the Prophets, this most Tremendous Sanction has been pretty clearly proved: Nor have I rested these Proofs wholly upon what is *revealed* in the Old Testament concerning this Doctrine, but I have deduced the absolute Necessity of it, as being what Logicians call a *sine qua non* with some incorrigible Sinners, from a great Variety of the *best* attested Facts, and from a thousand Experiments ineffectually repeated, to reclaim the Perverseness of human Nature by any kind of temporary or *finite* Rewards and Punishments. But the Reader has found in the Course of this Survey of human Nature, that there have been in all Ages of the World, some Men of such invincible Perverseness as not to be reclaimed from notorious Impiety by any temporary Expedients whatever. It is therefore from this invincible *Folly*, that I deduce the Necessity of *some* kind of eternal Punishments, because this unconquerable Perverseness forces the Almighty to this Dilemma, either to punish such incorrigible Sinners with *some* Degree of eternal Misery, or else to suffer them to abuse his Mercy and Long-suffering to *eternal* Ages. Which of these Expedients is most consistent with the Honour and Security of
 God's

God's Laws, let the *impartial* Reader be pleased to judge for himself. And as this Doctrine of future eternal Torments has been so fully proved, from several Revelations contained in the antient Scriptures, from the Perverseness of *some* incorrigible Sinners, and from a great Variety of historical Facts recorded in the sacred Oracles, I hope these Proofs, were I to adduce no other, will guard the secure, unthinking World, from the fatal Poison of those diabolical Books, which at present so much corrupt and debauch the Principles of the *numerous* unthinking Herd. From what Quarter these Instruments of Darkness come, and by *whom* they are principally encouraged, can be no secret to any thinking Man*: Nor need we wonder that these *Pests* of Society endeavour, by all possible Arts, to set aside this most powerful Sanction of a future eternal Judgment, because, when this *strong* Barrier is once thrown down, there will be an End of all religious *Ties*; and when all *Ties* of Religion are shook off, the fearful Consequence must *ere long* be, that every kind of Profaneness and Immorality will, like a rapid Torrent, break in upon us, and sweep down all before it in one *fearful* promiscuous Ruin.

This fatal Crisis, the *Enemies* of Britain are, at this *very* Hour, big of with the most eager and malicious *Hopes*. And it is matter of the deepest Concern to all serious Men, that
we

* See the Introductory Discourse.

we are not only secure all the while, as if not one *single* Enemy was watching over the Land, but that we should strive who should most assist the *common* Adversary, by corrupting and enervating the once *brave* hardy *Britons*, with every Species of *Effeminacy*, Intemperance and Excess *. What those great Personages whom this *interesting* Subject most concerns may think of this Matter, belongs not to me to meddle with; but what, in the Nature of Things, must (without a National Reformation) one Day be the Fate of *this* Land, requires no Spirit of *Divination* to foretel. And I doubt not, but it is the *pleasing* Expectation of that very *Nation* †, whose Fooleries we have all along so eagerly transplanted, that by our *growing* Vices and National Infatuation, we shall at last fall down a Prey to their Malice, under the heavy *Load* of our *own* Impieties. But from this dreadful *Catastrophe*, let every *Briton* implore that Almighty Being who directs *all* Events, to rescue and defend us; and to our Entreaties let every *rational* human Endeavour be speedily united: To trust to our *Prayers* alone would be superstitious Madness, and

* See the Introduction.

† It seems to be no inconsiderable Argument of providential Regard to *Britain*, that this Nation has, from its own late intestine Disputes, not been at Liberty to form as yet (at least not that *we* know of) any Projects destructive to the public Tranquillity of this much envied Island.

and to rely wholly upon *human* Means would be the Height of irreligious Self-sufficiency: And that these two powerful Engines may be effectually united for the Protection of this Land, let it be remembered once for all, that the shortest Method of obtaining this sure Protection of Heaven, is to *deserve* it.

S E C T. I.

The End of the THIRD BOOK.

BOOK IV.

S E C T. I.

NOtwithstanding it has been sufficiently proved, from the Scriptures of *Moses* and the Prophets, that the Sentence upon all remorseless Guilt, is that of Eternal Misery, yet for all this, it is not improbable but some perverse Minds may be apt enough to flatter themselves, that though this Sentence is passed upon them by the Law, it is in a great Measure took off by the Gospel: But how this Matter stands, let the divine Author of the Gospel determine. He positively declares, and by the most *striking* Figures, that there is not one single Point of the *Mosaic* Law but what must one Time or other be fulfilled. *For verily I say unto you, Till Heaven and Earth pass not one Jot or one Tittle, shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled.* St *Matthew* V. 18. And here it may not be improper, for the Sake of the unlearned Reader, whose Interest I always have at Heart, to obviate some Objections which the Enemies

mies of our Saviour have ever brought against the foregoing, and other Declarations of the like Import; especially this following, *viz. Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil*, St Matt. V. 17. For to this it is objected, that our Saviour did actually destroy, *i. e.* set aside and abolish many Things and Customs which the Law enjoined: Well, so undoubtedly he did, and his very doing so was fulfilling the Law, which he thus abolished *. For the Law was no more than the Type or Shadow of the Gospel; and when the great Archetype made his public Appearance upon Earth, the Reasons for the primary Institution of the Law ceased of Course, and therefore the Law was not abolished by our Saviour, but fulfilled, because in the *Messiah* were not only fulfilled *what* the Law and the Prophets had foretold concerning the divine Author of the second Covenant, but even the Ritual and Ceremonial Parts of the Law concerning Peace-Offerings, Sacrifices, the Blood of Bulls and of Goats, are by the Paschal Lamb of God, all rendered *useless* for the future. And, when these sacred Rites and Ceremonies of the Law were first instituted, they were never meant to continue in Force any longer than the glorious Appearance and divine Ministry

Z 2

* *Ipse Legis abrogatio erat impletio ejus. Syn. Crit. ad locum Abrogavit Legem (scil. Christus,) quia implevit.*

of him who was the great *Exemplar* and Fulfiller of them all, notwithstanding he set them all aside. And even the rigorous *Sentence* of the Curse was amply fulfilled by the great Ransom of Captive Man: For he was made a Curse for us, and Sin, who knew no Sin; and to save a devoted World, became the great Peace-Offering affixed to the ignominious Tree: By this Offering, he took away the Rigour and Severity of that *Hand-writing that was against us, and nailed it to the Cross*. And with Regard to the Moral Law, that unalterable Religion of right Reason, so far was Christ from cancelling, or even obscuring this Original Lamp of Heaven, that it was HE who brought this Eternal Truth, which blind perverse Men had wilfully shut their Eyes against, into full View and open Daylight by the Gospel. It was for the Revival, Illustration and Advancement of the Moral Law, that Christ came into the World at that dark Period, when a *fruitless Ceremony* was the Religion of the *Jews*, and *mad Superstition* the Devotion of the *Pagan World*. And farther with Regard to the Prophetic Part of the ancient Scriptures relating to the Messiah this was so punctually, and so apparently fulfilled, by the great Christian Lawgiver, that nothing but the Pride of the *vain-glorious Pharisee*, and the unconquerable Infidelity of the *Blinded Saducees*, could deny Jesus to be the *true Messiah*.

siah so often foretold in the Law and the
 Prophets, and in whom all the various Ends
 of first promulging the Law now ceased, as
 being all fully superseded by the *second Co-
 venant*. But still it will be urged from se-
 veral Passages in the New Testament, and
 even from what the Son of God himself af-
 firms, that upon the Appearance of the Mes-
 siah, and the Publication of the Gospel, the
 Law actually was abolished or wholly set aside.
 Why so it was; but then what was the Law
 thus cancelled and set aside by Christ? Why,
 it was the Law of a *Carnal* Commandment,
 as contradistinguished from the *Spiritual*
 Law. The Law which Christ set aside, was
 the *unprofitable* Law of Ceremonies, and
 those various Prohibitions concerning *un-
 clean Meats*, and mere *outside* Purity, such
 as, *Touch not, taste not, handle not* *. For as
 to the Legal Sacrifices, and various Offerings
 of the Law, *these* the great Paschal Lamb,
 at the same Time that he abolished, he ful-
 filled by the *Oblation of himself once offered*,
whereby he hath perfected for ever them that
are sanctified. The only Part of the Law
 therefore which the Son of God has cancelled
 and set aside, is the Ritual and Ceremonial
 Law. This when first instituted was only
 to remain in force for a certain Time: And
 as these various Legal Sacrifices were only
Figures of the Grand Atonement, one Day

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to

* Col. ii. 21.

to be made by the Death and Sufferings of the Lamb of God; so these Sacrifices and Peace Offerings were all, as to their *Original Institution*, explained, and, as to their Use, all answered, accomplished, and fulfilled by the Death and Sufferings of the *Blessed Jesus*. With Regard to the Promises and Predictions of the Law and the Prophets, our Saviour made good the one, and fulfilled the other; he *bestowed* upon his Followers those Spiritual Gifts which the Law and the Prophets had *promised only*; and fulfilled many of those Predictions which the inspired Writings had entered successively upon Record many Ages before. The Precepts of the Moral Law he more fully explained, and by his own Great Example shewed them to be of *Eternal Obligation*, and such as were, from their *intrinsic Value*, to be equally binding upon *all* the human Race: The Law of Ceremonies our Saviour did not wholly set aside, but only altered their outward Symbols. He changed the *Bloody Covenant* of Circumcision, for the *Peaceable Sign* of the Cross; and in Order to perfect this Sign in Baptism, he enjoined Circumcision of the *Heart*. And lastly, as to the Judicial Proceedings and Customs, which, under the Law, made *temporal Rewards* and Punishments their *principal Object*; our Saviour has expressly extended these to a future *Eternal Existence*. So that upon the whole, the hardened impenitent Sinner hears

hears a far more severe, or at least a more open and express Sentence of eternal Condemnation from the Mouth of the Christian, than from the Writings of the Jewish Law-giver. This Doctrine of future Eternal Torments which the Law (for Reasons I have formerly mentioned) did not speak out aloud, the Gospel proclaims in Terms too alarming to be either overlooked, or misinterpreted. *The Day Thou eatest thereof Thou shalt surely die*, was God's Sentence upon Adam; which Words when seriously weighed point out the Doctrine of a future Eternal Death to all irreclaimable Impiety; yet this Sentence, in Case of Adam's Transgression, is not by many Degrees so openly alarming, as what the Son of God often pronounces upon impenitent Sinners. At one Time, he consigns over such incorrigible Men, to the Punishment of that dreadful Region, where, as he affirms, the tormenting Worm of the Sinner's Conscience never dies, nor the burning Heat of unrepented Guilt, Shame and Confusion of Face, can never be quenched. At another Time he expressly declares that all profane, impenitent, and hard-hearted Men shall, upon the dreadful Close of the solemn Audit at the Day of Judgment, be sent away into everlasting Misery. *These * shall go*

Z 4

away

* It seems THESE do not mean the *Gentiles* or wicked on the left Hand, in Contradistinction to the *Sheep*, or Righteous

away into everlasting Punishment. And that this different Lot of good and bad Men in a future State is to be of *equal* Duration, is evident from this Duration being expressed in the Original by the very *same* Word. So that if in one Case it means the Eternal Happiness of just Men made perfect, it as certainly denounces the Doctrine of Eternal Torments in the other. For why should αἰώνιος (the Original Word) signify Everlasting and Eternal when joined to the Substantive ζών (Life) but when joined to κόλασις lose its true Sense, and signify nothing more than a Temporary Duration? But as we are all

ready Righteous which we are told by the supreme Judge will, at the *last Audit*, be placed on his left. But methinks I hear my Reader say, How can this be? Does not our Saviour himself assert it? And must not the *Contrast* in the Passage before us, either mean that *those* on the right Hand will be admitted into a different State from *those* on the left, or else that the Judge gives himself the Lie? Why indeed a Man of common Reasoning would take this to be the Case, but a Modern Writer, of very extraordinary Parts indeed, will not allow THESE [αὐτοί] to be a relative Word, or at least not to its proper Antecedent in the foregoing Verses, nor indeed to any *Ens* or Being actually subsisting. What then, it will be asked, are we to understand by αὐτοί, THESE? Why no Body at all, only the *Reflection* (excuse this Nonsense) of a *Shadow*, of an *Image*, of a *Phantom*, which, after the Day of Judgement, is to be hurled down to Hell amongst a Parcel of furious Knights Errant, who, to all Eternity, will be running Spears and Darts through the Shadows of all hardened irreclaimable Sinners. *Risum teneatis Amici?* (See God's great Love and Tenderneſs to his Creature Man. Chap. iv.)

ready to give the Word its *full* Force when applied to the Happiness of Heaven, as we are glad to believe that the Joys laid up in store for good Men will never intermit, nor never end, why should we be so dangerously deluded, as to give the Word a different Interpretation when applied to the Torments of the Damned? These two Sentences were pronounced by one and the same Lip of Truth; and to shew that the Sentence in both Cases is that of Eternal Duration, the Sacred Text (as it were purposely) uses the very same Adjective αἰώνιον, that captious perverse Minds might have no Plea to evade the true Import of this dreadful Sentence; nor any Temptation to sin the more, out of fond Hopes that they should finally escape unpunished for their Presumption. This Word is what the Seventy Interpreters retain in their Version of that memorable Passage, *Dan. xii. 2.* Καὶ πολλοὶ τῶν καθευδόντων ἐν τῇς χώματι ἀπεχάρθησονται ὅταν εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον, καὶ ὅσοι εἰς ὀνειδισμόν καὶ εἰς αἰσχρὴν αἰώνιον.

Some have contended that this Passage only relates to the great *Respite* or Enlargement of the Jews upon the Death of *Antiochus*, under whose Tyranny and Bondage they had so miserably groaned. But I think the Absurdity of this Opinion, is in nothing so manifest as in the different State described in the foregoing Passage, where it is expressly declared that *some* should awake to everlasting

Life;

Life; *ἐς τὴν αἰώνιον* and *some* to Shame and everlasting Contempt, *ἐς ἀναιδέα καὶ ἐς αἰσχρὴν αἰώνιον*. And surely that must be an odd kind of Enlargement and Deliverance which brings upon the People delivered *Shame* and *everlasting Contempt*. But I think that the Deliverance here foretold was not that from the Tyranny of Man only, but from the far more cruel Bondage of Sin and Death: It was the same memorable Victory described by *Hosea* (Chap. xiii. 14.) which denotes not a temporal, but that glorious eternal Conquest which *Michael* (the Messiah) the great Prince, would obtain over all the Powers of Darkness at that joyous Period when *Death* should be swallowed up of Victory. If therefore the first Clause, or Member of this eminent Prediction of *Daniel* relates (as without all Peradventure it does) to the final Resurrection of the Just to Eternal Felicity; then the latter Part of this Passage must denote that fearful Resurrection which the supreme Judge calls the Resurrection of Condemnation; *ἀναστασις Κρίσεως* (*St John's Gosp. v. 29.*) And that the Sentence of this final Condemnation is that of an eternal Punishment, our Saviour has more expressly declared *St Matth. xxv. 46.*

And as a farther Illustration of this Matter, it may not be altogether improper to take Notice, that the Word by which the *Sacred Book* expresses the Duration of Future Misery,

fery,

fery, is a Compound of two other Words, which, even when separate, denote something more than a mere *finite* Duration; and when used as a Compound, the Expression must needs be stronger. For the lettered Reader need not be reminded, that *αιωνος* is a Compound of *αι* (*medii litteræ subtractæ*) and *ΩΝ*: This last, is the very Word by which the Seventy *Greek* Interpreters express *that essential* Property, or Attribute of God, his Eternal Existence, *Εγω ειμι ο ΩΝ* and *ο ΩΝ* *. And though I am well aware it may be said, that *Αιων*, *Mundus vel Aeternum*, may (according to the foregoing Etymology) have existed from Eternity; because, as these Men may argue, if *Αιων* denotes a Thing eternally existing, then for this very Reason, the visible material World has existed from *all* Eternity. To which I beg leave to answer, that the *Grecian* Philosophers who adopted this Word, were (many of them) of Opinion, that this visible material World actually *was Eternal*; and though they were out in their Philosophy, they were *right* in the Choice of the Term, which was the strongest Word, to denote an *Eternal Duration*, their Language could furnish them with †. Besides, what Reason can be assigned, why infinite Wisdom should express the

* See Exod. iii.

† Ο γ' ουν Αιων τον χρονον το μελλον και το παρεστος. (Clem. Alexan. Strommat. Lib. I. p. 218.)

the Torments of Hell, by a Word that always denotes an endless Duration, (and when applied to the Happiness of Heaven, is never disputed) if after all this *solemn* Declaration, the Expression means no more than a mere *finite* Portion of Time? Or what could induce the Lip of Truth to utter such a *grave* Falshood, as to threaten his Creatures with a Punishment, which, according to this ridiculous Interpretation of the Word *Αἰών*, God never designed to execute? But how unworthy this Method would be of an All-wise Deity, let the *serious* Thinker judge for himself. God has strictly forbidden his Creatures to do Evil, upon that *plausible Motive*, that Good may come of it; and therefore it would be very odd, if, for all this, the Deity should break his *own* divine Rule, and utter such a solemn Untruth, by pronouncing the Torments of Hell Eternal, if in Fact they were not so.

But perhaps it may be said, (for the Modern Dupes of Infidelity are capable of any Absurdity) that the Scriptures pronounce the Torments of Hell to be Eternal, merely *in terrorem*, in order to deter Men from Sin, out of Dread and Horror. Shocking Infatuation! For Men, when they cannot any otherwise deny the Doctrine of Future Eternal Punishments, as expressed in the Scriptures, to make those very Scriptures as so many

Scare-

Scarecrows and *Bugbears*, invented, not to punish, but to frighten.

And for once let these Men be answered according to their Folly; let us agree with them, that this Doctrine was advanced only to frighten poor ignorant Mortals into Obedience of God's Laws; still would not a Being of infinite Wisdom, have kept this interesting Secret in his own Bosom? For when it was *once out*, the great End proposed could never be answered; and therefore, this Doctrine had much better not have been invented at all; because it would reflect so basely upon the Honour, Wisdom, and *Veracity* of the Divine Being. For suppose any *Temporal* Prince, in order to secure the Veneration and Allegiance of all his Subjects, should give out, that whoever knowingly rebelled against the Royal Authority, and wilfully Transgressed the fixed Laws of the Land, should be punished with Death, or perpetual Banishment; to what purpose would this Declaration of the Prince be, if his Subjects knew he never intended to put this Declaration in Execution? For when *once* it was known, that the Prince only meant to frighten, not to punish his rebellious Subjects, this *sham* Menace would redound so little to the Honour and Advantage of the Prince, that it would be apt to tempt the base and disingenuous Part of his Subjects *presumptuously* to rebel, and wilfully to dare the *Royal* Displeasure.

And

And this is an Absurdity which the Deniers of the Doctrine of future Torments must suppose infinite Wisdom itself to be guilty of, if this Doctrine be only *threatened*, but never intended to be inflicted. *These* then are the palpable Contradictions of those Writers who deny this alarming Doctrine. And what is still a greater Miracle of *Infatuation* than all the rest, these Pestilential Writers who carry on the lucrative Trade of crying down the Authority of the Sacred Oracles, and ridiculing the Tremendous Sanction of the Divine Law; are the Men, whose Persons and Writings are at this *Tragical Hour* of National Security, held in the highest Esteem by the whole unthinking Herd, both of the *great* Vulgar and the Small. Others there are, who fond of every Appearance of an Argument that will sooth them in Sin and Folly, think that this Punishment of eternal Torments, though so positively denounced, will notwithstanding be wholly taken off by the Grand Atonement. Now there is no Doubt to be made, but our Saviour, by his meritorious Peace-Offering, has taken this Curse of eternal Death out of the way, and nailed it to the Cross. But yet for all this, he has not rescued Human Nature from this Sentence of eternal Death *unconditionally*, as will more fully appear by shewing what our Saviour has, and what he has not done for the final Redemption of
fallen

fallen Man. As to what the great Ransom of Man has done, it is as much as could be done, consistent with the Wisdom and Justice of the Divine Being.

And to be convinc'd of this, let us just view the State of Man as wilfully fallen, and as redeemed from the Sentence of that Fall. Fallen Man, *as such*, had nothing to expect but the strict and rigorous Execution of the *Eden Sentence*, *The Day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die*. Nay, and this was not only a Temporal Death, by which Man was to put off, for a while, the heavy *Incumbrances* of feeble Flesh and Blood, but it was an eternal *Existence* † in some Future State of Misery, after this visible Expiration of the mortal Part of Man.

Man when fallen from his Faith and Allegiance in Heaven, became subject to Death, and to him that had the Power of this Death, that is the Devil. Man, upon his Fall, was in the most deplorable State, helpless in *himself*, and without Hope from any other Quarter. When he cast his Eyes inwards, nothing

† Ils mourront, et ils vivront en même Temps. Ils tendront à n'être pas, et ils subsisteront. Ces Choses sont terribles à entendre, mais combien seront elles plus terribles pour ceux qui les éprouveront ?

Pict. La Theol. Chret. Liv. xiii. Chapit. xvi.

This *Pictet* borrows from the Works of St. Gregory, and that this was the Notion of the Death, or the State of the Damned, which has generally obtained, few Men of reading need be told.

thing but Anger, Remorse, and a *sad Scene* of approaching Misery surrounds him. If he dared to look up to Heaven, *Shame* and Confusion of Face at once seized him, for having so carelessly and ungratefully rebelled against the bounteous Author of his late unbounded Happiness. But behold, such was the Tenderness and Compassion of God to disobedient Man, that notwithstanding he had wilfully flung himself away, an *expedient* to restore offending Man, is graciously provided by offended Heaven: An *expedient* which nothing less than infinite Wisdom could have invented, nor any thing less than infinite Love to Man could undergo. Heaven therefore, out of Pity to fallen Man, enters into a most solemn Covenant, to restore him again (in due Time) to that glorious Happiness, he had not thought worth preserving. God was graciously pleased to take off the Curse from Man, and to admit him to Pardon and Peace, upon Condition, that Divine Justice could be satisfied, and the Honour of God's Laws inviolably preserved. This could not be done without some Ransom to be paid for offending Man, as infinitely great, as the Justice, Power and Holiness, of that Tremendous Being, against whom the Offence was committed. But what created Being, either would, or was able to pay such a mighty Ransom for the Redemption of fallen Man? The highest Order of Angels could

could not undertake to satisfy an offended God. They *themselves* are peccable, liable to transgress, and, in God's Sight, *chargeable with Folly* ||. Besides, as human Nature had offended, it was some one in *human* Nature, and not in *that* of Angels, that was to satisfy offended Justice. The Redeemer therefore of fallen Man, *took not on him the Nature § of Angels, but he took on him the Seed of Abraham, i. e. the Nature of Man.* For as *human Nature* had offended, in *human Nature* was the Atonement to be made. And this was not perhaps purely done to satisfy the Justice of the divine Being, but that by our Saviour's taking our very Nature upon him, in *that Nature* dying a most painful and agonizing Death, and in that *Nature* likewise conquering Death, and *him* that had the Power of Death, we might have a glorious Proof what human Nature is capable of; and that by this Consideration, all those desponding People might be delivered, *who through Fear of Death are all their Life-time subject to Bondage.* This Atonement therefore, the Son of God most graciously made. He offered himself a Ransom for fallen Man, and in human Nature made an Atonement for the Sins of human Race.

By Virtue of this grand Peace-Offering, our Saviour has a *stipulated* Right to plead in behalf of the greatest *Penitent* Sinner. The

A a

Merits

|| Job iv. 18.

§ Heb. ii. 16.

Merits of his Death, and mighty Sufferings, are in themselves a *sufficient Sacrifice, Oblation and Satisfaction, for the Sins of the whole World*: But then, it is ever upon *these Conditions*, that the Men to whom our Saviour's Merits and Righteousness are imputed, join to *these* a lively Faith, attended by their own best Endeavours, or where their Endeavours have been wanting, sincere Repentance, and a firm Resolution of better Conduct for the Future.

Our Lord's Merits, are undoubtedly in themselves infinite, and imputable to all the Descendants of *Adam*: But to say that the Merits of the Death of *Christ* are not only *imputable*, but * actually *imputed* to every Man living, is a flat Contradiction to the whole *Tenor* of the *Christian Covenant*, which enjoins in a most solemn manner, *Faith, Good Works, and Repentance*.

For notwithstanding the Lord of Life has abolished the Hand-writing of the Law, and blotted out *the Sentence* of Death; though he has rescued fallen Man out of the Power of the Devil, and conditionally redeemed the whole World out of the Hand of the Enemy; still for all this, perverse and wicked Men

* This however is what the modern Abettors of the *Misericordian Doctrine*, with great Confidence assert; and I am persuaded it has been owing, in a great Measure, to their not distinguishing betwixt the Terms *imputable*, and *imputed*, as is shewn elsewhere more at large.

Men may slight and abuse every gracious Means of Salvation, and by so doing, utterly perish. *Christ* has indeed paid the Price of Redemption for every Man born in the World, but yet every Man does not think it worth while to be at the least Pains to obtain that offered Redemption. Wicked Men would be glad to receive this purchased Redemption, and to be eternally happy, if they could be so upon their own Terms: For if they could give a loose to Sin and Sensuality here, and be, for all this, eternally happy hereafter, then they would like this Redemption by *Jesus Christ* very well. But this is not the Case; and though *Christ* both came into the World to save Sinners, and has Merits more than sufficient to atone for the Sins of the whole World, yet, if Men will not accept this gracious Offer of eternal Happiness, upon those Terms in which it is proposed, these lazy Profligates will have none but themselves to blame: They might have been happy, but would not: And tho' *Christ* had paid the great Price of their Redemption with his own precious Blood, they wilfully refused their offered Freedom. From the foregoing Account of the grand Atonement, we may learn, that it is no sort of Reflection or Lessening of our Blessed Redeemer's Merits and Sufferings, to say, that by these, all the World will not be saved from eternal Torments; because the Reason why some

Men will not be saved by Virtue of the grand Atonement, is not owing to the insufficiency of that Atonement, but to the *Infidelity*, and *incorrigible* Impiety of the *Men* for whom it was made. It is not enough to a *hardened Impenitent*, that Christ has paid the Price of his Redemption from Death eternal, unless Heaven forces it upon him in Spite of all his Perverseness. But this will never be done; nor can any Man in his Senses either expect it, or accuse the Almighty of Rigour for not doing it. For to state this important Subject in the fullest Light, let us suppose that any Christian Prince had great Numbers of his Subjects taken captive by the Emperor of *Morocco*, or any other barbarian Tyrant, and that these miserable Captives were not to be set at Liberty, unless their own Sovereign would send his only Son, with a certain *immense* Treasure to redeem them from their cruel Bondage: Upon which he readily complies, and his Son as *cheerfully* undertakes to procure the Freedom of his Father's Subjects. He forthwith makes his Voyage, arrives at the Place where the Captives are detained, and pays down at once the *stipulated* Price of their Redemption: Nay, and further than this, the Christian Prince is willing, and able to give ten thousand times more to redeem his Subjects, should the Tyrant insist upon it. However, the Captives are *all alike*
 set

set at Liberty, as being *all alike* included in the stipulated Agreement, and may now return, if they please, to their native Land. But if after all these *gracious* Steps of the Prince to procure the Liberty of his captive Subjects, some of them should still slight their purchased Freedom with a *fullen* Contempt, would any one pity them, or accuse their Prince for want of Fatherly Compassion to his Subjects? No, the Fault, in this Case, would be chargeable upon none but those perverse Men who preferred Bondage and Misery under a *foreign* Tyrant, to Freedom and Happiness in their own native Country. This Instance shews us in as full and familiar a Point of Light as I can think of, that tho' the Merits of the grand Atonement are in themselves sufficient to redeem a whole captive World, and to rescue all Mankind from eternal Misery, yet it does not from hence follow, that all will partake of the Benefits of this Atonement. All indeed might if they were not perversely bent on their own Ruin: Heaven has done every Thing to open the Sinner's Eyes; but if for all this, Men are wilfully determined to shut out Conviction, they must not blame Heaven if they reap the Wages of their Sin and their Folly, *Death eternal*. For this is one fixed Decree against all *boasting, impenitent* Sinners, contained in that solemn *Book* of the Law, of which it is so positively af-

firm'd, and by an Authority which, tho' *disputed* cannot be disprov'd, that tho' Heaven and Earth pass away, not one *Yot* or one *Tittle* shall in no wise pass from this immutable eternal Law, till *all* be fulfilled.

S E C T. II.

TILL the World is seriously convinced, that *eternal* Death is the fearful Sanction inseparably annexed to all deliberate, presumptuous, and impenitent Crimes, we may as soon think to hush the Winds, and still the raging Ocean, as to stop the headlong Libertine in the *mad* Career of Vice and Folly. It will be an Attempt as absurd as impossible, to reclaim the abandoned Sinner from the Paths of Vice, unless he is made sensible that these *fatal* Paths lead him at last into unavoidable Ruin. Nothing can prevail with the Man that is once got into the beaten Track of Vice, but shewing him that *fearful Pit* which is at the End of this fatal enchanted Road. For such is the wilfully contracted Perverseness of some unhappy Tempers, that notwithstanding the Almighty condescends to court them to accept of his *kind Overtures* of eternal Life by the most *endearing* Arguments of Love and Compassion, and these a thousand times repeated, yet such Men have neither Discernment to see the glorious *Diadem* of an heavenly

venly Crown thus conspicuously display'd, nor Ingenuity to own their Folly and Ingratitude for obstinately refusing to live and be happy, *happy* beyond Description, and above the strongest Imagination; a *Happiness* which all the highest Joys of this World can't so much as furnish the Mind of Man with any distant Idea of: It is a Happiness which the great Saint *Paul*, notwithstanding his natural and inspired Eloquence, could only describe in *negative* Terms, and at the most say what it was not, (*viz.*) *Such as Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it entered into the Heart of Man to conceive.* And even supposing it possible for the Joys of Heaven to be painted to human Understanding in their true *native* Lustre yet, I fear, few would be found to whom these exalted Delights would appear so amiable and inviting, as to tempt them over to the Interest of Virtue. For tho' the reversionary Happiness promised to Virtue is sufficient to engage the Attention of every Man living; yet it is this Happiness being a *reversionary*, and not a *present* Inheritance, that makes so many People coolly decline the Interest of sound Religion, and meanly desert the glorious Cause of Virtue. For notwithstanding this *celestial Beauty* has, in all Ages, had great Crowds of pretended Votaries; yet her divine Laws have rather been *admired* than *observed*. And while Philoso-

phers have vied with each other, who should say the finest Things in Behalf of Virtue, and bestowed whole Volumes in studied Encomiums of her present noble Rewards, still Virtue has scarce been able to keep either her self, or her Friends in Countenance. And at the same Time that Virtue has been so highly applauded in Public, she herself has been drooping in some obscure Retirement with a few solitary Friends, and having nothing but *unmeaning* Compliments to support her, she has been starved, though praised *, by a lazy Crowd of flattering Sycophants. And as this is the well-known Case with Regard to Virtue, and the highest Rewards she can offer to her Disciples in this *present* World, we need not be astonished that the Bulk of Mankind pays so little Attention to those *distant* reverendinary Joys that are promised to be the sure Portion of all virtuous and good Men in a future State. And besides, there is something in the very Nature of these promised Delights, so *far* above the Relish of a sensual Mind, that the Sinner is not to be won over to the Service of Virtue by any Arguments drawn from that Quarter. And as the Joys of Futurity are in themselves all Spiritual, and, as such, to be no otherwise than *spiritually* discerned, it is no Wonder if these sublime Pleasures appear flat and insipid.

Laudatur & alget.

fixed to the voluptuous Libertine, whose Mind has been habitually emerged in gross and carnal Indulgences. Such a Man as this has no higher Ideas than what are placed in mere Objects of *Sense*, as to any refined Pleasures he cannot discern them, upon which Account they are Foolishness unto him. Nay, and notwithstanding Virtue, that bounteous divine Patroness, bestows upon her Votaries temporal Blessings with *one* Hand, and in the *other* holds out the glorious Prize of an eternal Crown, still the deluded Captives of Sin and Voluptuousness are stupidly blind to *both*.

But what makes this general Coolness in the Service of Virtue and Religion matter of great Surprise, is that noble and miraculous Distinction, which the divine Being is pleased frequently to make between Virtue and Vice, by giving to each its respective *Earnest* of his Approbation and Displeasure even in this World. For how incurious an Observer of *the Ways of God to Man* must that dull Mortal be, who cannot see this *eminent* Distinction which the Author of Nature is so often pleased to make betwixt Virtue and Vice in the present State of Things? And is not this temporal Distinction wisely meant to give Men an Earnest of *that* eternal Happiness, and *that* everlasting Misery which will respectively be the *sure* Recompence of the persevering good Man, and

and the unconquerable *Impenitent* in a future State? And tho' it will be alledged that this Argument is not conclusive, because Virtue is often distressed, and Vice, on the contrary, as often crowned with Success in this World; upon which Account it does not (say some Men) at present appear, that God is more pleased with one than the other. Yet to this Objection be it replied, that notwithstanding Virtue and Vice often fare alike, nay, and Vice sometimes carrying it triumphantly over Virtue, still this only regards *general* Providence, that *Event* of Things which happens promiscuously to the Righteous and to the Wicked, the same natural Causes always producing the same Effects. But when it is evident that God, upon extraordinary Occasions, often vouchsafes to interpose, by shewing his Approbation of Virtue and Abhorrence of Vice, rewarding the one, and punishing the other in this Life; who can doubt but the *grand* Design of shewing this marvellous Distinction, is to convince God's rational Creatures, that a steady Perseverance in Religion, to the Hour of Death, will entitle a Man to the future Favours of Heaven; and, on the contrary, that the Man who passes out of Life a hardened, impenitent, and boasting Sinner, must eternally remain an Object of that divine Justice, which, to the last, he presumptuously offended? For as in all judicial

dicial Punishments inflicted for any particular Crimes, those who are innocent of these Crimes have ever been miraculously preserved (otherwise the Punishment would neither have answered any wise End, nor could it have been certainly known whether it had been a judicial Punishment for such a Sin or not) so I should think this *two-fold* Miracle thus visibly displayed in the Punishment of the Guilty and the Preservation of the Innocent, tho' both in the very *same* apparent Danger, would be enough to convince any Man of common Sense, that the Author of Nature delighted in Virtue and abhorred Vice: And that notwithstanding he did not (for very wise Reasons) always make this Distinction manifest at present, yet this *eternal* Truth would fully appear at the last Day, that *regulating Hour*, which is called the *Revelation of the righteous Judgement of God*. But since it is a Fact as melancholy as notorious, that some Men are not to be won over to the Service of Religion, neither by that miraculous Distinction so often made between Virtue and Vice in this World, (as a certain Earnest of what must be expected in some future State) nor by those glorious Rewards for the most Part attending Virtue here, it is this unaccountable Perverseness, which makes good *what* in the Course of this Subject has been often observed (*viz.*) that Men may be so deeply emerged in habitual Sensuality,

quality, as not to be reclaimed by any temporary Expedient. As to the noble Rewards of Virtue, the *Voluptuary* has neither Idea nor Relish for such refined Pleasures; nor would he, in his own sordid Mind, think it any *Punishment* to be excluded from the Kingdom of Heaven, and the Enjoyment of those rapturous Delights. This Exclusion from the Kingdom of God would (it is much to be feared) be deemed by profane Men as a Favour, if the Matter was finally to end *here*: Nor do I imagine, that if God was utterly to annihilate every hardened impenitent Sinner, it would at all diminish, but greatly increase the Number of incorrigible Offenders in this World. For were such a *dangerous Principle* as *that* of the impenitent Sinner's total Annihilation after Death, once to prevail, it would be so far from promoting the Honour of the Creator, (as a certain Writer * has absurdly advanced,) that it would tempt the base, the cowardly, and dissingenuous Part of God's Creatures to give a full Swing to all manner of beastly Pleasures, and then plunge into eternal Oblivion with that profane Speech in their Mouths, *this Moment* we shall die. And besides, were this Notion once generally to obtain, it would deprive the Soul of its most solid Comforts, as well as put an utter Stop to all Thoughts of Reformation. For if it

* Burnet de Stat. Mort. & Resur.

was believed to be inconsistent with the Honour of God, to suffer one single notorious Sinner to exist in another World, what Man alive, tho' he endeavoured ever so much to keep aloof from all Impiety, could have any Security of surviving the Grave? For since *all have sinned, and all come short of the Glory and Approbation of God*, all (even the most punctual and conscientious Observers of God's Laws) would be in perpetual Dread of being utterly deprived of Existence after Death. This Dread would naturally arise from an inward Conviction of having come infinitely short of that Perfection, which could entitle them to any just Claim of God's Approbation. And should this fatal Delusion spread, as there is too much Reason to fear it does, the disingenuous Part of Mankind would on the one Hand be tempted to commit the most outrageous Impieties; and on the other, all timorous gloomy People, would, thro' Fear of Death and Dread of *Annihilation*, be all their Life-time *subject to Bondage* *. For if this Life were to put an utter End to the Existence of the whole Man, all hardened Offenders would, in this Case, chime in with those desperate Villains, whose *well-known Maxim* it is, "We can but die; it will

* Perhaps it was this *Dread of Annihilation* that was the Source of daily Misery to those People, whom the inspired Author of the Epist. to the *Heb.* mention, Chap. ii. 15.

will be but one *Swing* at the last, and then all's over; we shall jump into the Land where Men and Things are eternally forgotten." This is a short Sketch of that mistaken Opinion which endeavours to wheedle ignorant Men, both out of their Senses and their very Existence. But how this can promote the Service of Religion, or advance the Honour of an allwise God, let the Abettors of this Opinion either prove, or acknowledge their Error in advancing such a destructive and ridiculous Notion. As therefore it is abundantly evident that all the Objections against eternal Torments hitherto suggested by seducing Spirits, and patronized by some deluded Men, are too big with Absurdities to go down with any Man of tolerable Capacity, I think even *common Decency* will bid us pay *some* Regard at least, to what is deducible from the sacred Code. Now it is from the *History alone* of the Bible, without immediately calling in the Aid of those various Revelations concerning the Punishments expressly denounced against all hardened Impiety, that I have endeavoured to prove the absolute Necessity of that *fearful Repompance*, eternal Misery. For whoever will be at the Pains to look over, with *honest* Attention, the History of his Bible, will be convinced that the Bulk of Mankind could never be won over to the Service of Religion, by its other *grand* Sanction, eternal Felicity.

Felicity. There has, in every Age and Nation, been a set of perverse Sinners, who, with all the united Force of Wit, Malice, and Envy, have made a Trade of ridiculing and opposing Religion, in Spite of those noble Rewards which Religion could promise and bestow upon her Adherents. This is a melancholy Fact, not confined either to the Land of *Palestine*, *Egypt*, *Assyria*, *Persia*, or those other Nations, whose History is any Ways connected with the sacred Story; but I could more fully evince the same *sad Truth* (if it fell under my present Design) from the History of *Greece* and *Rome*, it being from thence very apparent that these two grand Monarchies out-strode the *Assyrian* and *Persian* in most kinds of deliberate and *refined* Impieties: And all this in Defiance of that utter Desolation and Ruin, which hardened Impieties had brought upon the two first. But however, in that Survey of human Nature which we have already beheld, we have had too many convincing Proofs, that there has in every Period of the World, been a certain Set of Men so fatally, either self-deluded, or wheedled into Ruin by the Subtilty of the grand Deceiver, that neither the Promises of eternal Happiness, nor the greatest Calamities, which an incensed God from Time to Time inflicted upon them, could prevail with these incorrigible Sinners to *think*, *repent*, and *amend*.

amend. The never-fading Joys of a blissful Paradise, could neither secure the *First* of Men from offending, nor could these rapturous Delights (tho' promised again by the Lip of Truth to all sincere repenting Sinners) keep some of his Descendants from not only sinning, but boasting and persevering in Sin, even breathing out their departing Souls in horrid Strains of unrepented Profaneness. And as to any temporal Judgments upon profane Sinners, they have often grown hardened more and more, the Moment these divine Judgments were mercifully removed. By what other Arguments then, are such infatuated Men to be awakened out of the Lethargy of Sin? Why this Argument was indeed first revealed in *Eden*, the Necessity of it evinced by the Defectiveness of the *Law*, afterwards urged by several of the *Prophets*, and at last openly divulged by the *Gospel*, as the only *Expedient* to rouse the careless Sinner from the *fatal Bed* of intoxicating Sensuality. This Argument is that fearful Sanction of future Torments, inseparably annexed to a hardened impenitent Transgression of the Laws of God. Nothing can reclaim the *abandoned* Sinner, but the Thoughts of a Judgment to come, and the dreadful Sentence then to be pronounced upon all such as wilfully plunge into Eternity under the Load of unrepented Guilt and daring Profaneness. It was this most alarming
Argument

Argument that both convinced the great gentile Apostle, and enabled him to rouse others from Sin and Folly. *Knowing therefore (says he) the Terror * of the Lord we persuade Men.* And what St Paul means by this *Terror of the Lord*, the Verse before these Words declare; *For we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, that every One may receive the Things done in his Body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.* Surely then by the Force of this alarming Doctrine, this *Terror*, or fearful Judgment of the Lord, the Dispensers of God's Word may hope to make some Impressions upon the most obdurate and flinty Bosom. For this is an Argument so very striking, that notwithstanding the Sinner may have befottered his Reason, and hushed Conscience asleep, yet his Senses are most fearfully alarmed; and the Love and Tenderness for his own Frame, the *inbred* Abhorrence of Pain, and natural Dread of lasting Tortures, must all convince him how fearful a Thing it will be to dwell in the *eternal Dungeon †*, or with everlasting Burnings.

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* Εἰδοὺς οὖν τοῦ ΦΟΒΟΝ τοῦ Κυρίου ἀνδραποῦς πειθομεν.
2 Cor. v. 11.

† Εἰ τῇ ΤΟΥΤῳ τῷ αἰῶνι. See Septuag. *Isaiah xxxiii.*
14.



S E C T. III.

THIS absolute Insufficiency of all *finite Expedients* to deter the abandoned Sinner from Living and Dying in *boasted* Impiety, having, in the Course of this Subject, been fully demonstrated, we are forced, whether we will or no, to acknowledge the Necessity of that fearful Recompence, the eternal Punishment of all incorrigible and impenitent Sinners. The Truth of this Doctrine has already, in Part, been shewn from a great Variety of *historical Facts*, as recorded in the sacred Code; what therefore remains to be done next is to adduce some farther Proofs, whereby the absolute Necessity of this *tremendous Sanction* will more fully appear. This being done I will point out some of those eminent Advantages which a firm Belief of this Doctrine would naturally derive upon the State or Body Politic. First, As to the absolute Necessity of this alarming Doctrine, it appears, in a great Degree, from that unrestrained and outrageous Wickedness, that would obtain amongst the dissingenuous Part of Mankind, in Case this powerful Sanction of *eternal* Judgment was once set aside. The headstrong Sinner, if he was sure not to be called to the most severe Account in some future State, would be kept within no sort of Bounds; he would be hurried on by his Passions into the most

most *savage* and atrocious Impieties. And when all Ties of Religion were once broken through, the abandoned *Libertine* would be as dangerous to Society, as a vicious fiery *Steed* let loose into a Crowd without Curb or Bridle. For as to any *temporal* Punishments upon notorious Offenders, tho' they are of Service as deterring many and reclaiming some from the Paths of Vice, yet there are Thousands who are *Proof* against all kinds of *present Tortures*. As to any Calamities which carry the Marks of *judicial* Punishments, whether in Respect of private, or public Visitations for any crying Sins, these may indeed, and do no doubt open the Eyes of some; but yet there are great Numbers, who, instead of being reclaimed by any Judgments of Heaven, (sent in Mercy to rouse the careless Sinner) when the correcting *Rod* of God is once laid down, they sin more and more; and, like the proud Tyrant of *Egypt*, when *one* Judgment is removed they call down a *greater*: While *this* lies hard upon them, they *beg* to be delivered, and *promise* to reform: No sooner does God deliver them, but they again dare the Vengeance but *just* removed; upon this, *another* Punishment overtakes them, while they feel the *Smart*, they cry out in their Distress, God sends them speedy Relief; the merciful Respite makes them still more hardened, and they are more outrageously wicked, the oftener God vouchsafes to deliver them out of their Distress.

Nor has this been the shocking Ingratitude and vile Rebellion of some Individuals only, but of almost whole Nations. To say that our *own* stands clear of this dark Charge would be vile Hypocrisy and pitiful Adulation; as well as giving the Lie to some * Occurrences in this Kingdom too *recent* to be forgotten. It is but a few Years since the Sword of divine Wrath was brandished over the Land: This made the Nation, for a *Time*, think and be serious. Religion seemed to lift up *her* Head, and Devotion (in Appearance at least) sat upon most Peoples Countenances: Days of *National* Fasting and Humiliation were appointed, and, by great Numbers, observed with a Solemnity and Penitence *well* becoming such an alarming Occasion. God was pleased to rid the Nation of its Panic, and to sheathe the Sword of offended Justice. But no sooner was the threatening Calamity removed, but the Nation forgot that any such divine Judgment had ever hovered over it at all. When the impending Storm was blown over, Devotion and serious Thinking were banished; and as Men's Fears abated, their Follies and Vices broke out afresh with *greater* Licentiousness. When Peace was restored to our Land, the Nation sunk down at once into a most dangerous Dream of careless Security, as if it had not *one* Enemy more for the Future to interrupt its Tranquillity. By and by another

* The late Rebellion, &c.

other *Alarm*, not common in this *Part* of the Globe, put the Nation in no small Consternation: The trembling Earth seemed to *forebode* the Displeasure of Heaven, and, by its affrighted Heavings, to *preach* Repentance and Amendment to its guilty Inhabitants. This for a while made some think, and others write upon this uncommon Phænomenon, And so astonishing was the Panic conceived from a ridiculous Prediction * of the third Monthly Return of these *Convulsions* of the Earth, that the very Capitol of this Kingdom was cowardly deserted by a Set of *Dastards*, who did not consider that all Places are alike dangerous to the Guilty, when divine Vengeance is abroad in the World. This Behaviour of our *worthy* and heroic Countrymen, confirms the Truth of the wise Man's Remark, *The Wicked flee when no Man pursueth*; and withal affords a memorable Instance, that when any People lose their Religion, they lose even *common Sense*, and with their Virtue give up their Reason and Understanding. But however, now all these alarming Calls to Repentance are over, the Nation in general is allowed to be more deeply sunk in Sloth and supine Indulgence, than it was before these merciful Warnings of God's approaching Vengeance. The whole Business of the *gay World* is Pleasure *only*, and happy for the Nation would it be, if these Pleasures

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were

* *Swiss* Prophet, Anno Dom. 1751.

were confined within the Bounds of Prudence and Reason. But into such unrestrained Licentiousness have most Ranks of Men eagerly ran, since Peace was restored to these Realms, and all approaching Judgments seemingly removed, as is not to be paralleled in *English History*, no not even in the dissolute Reign of the *Merry Monarch*. For Pleasures, which were originally and wisely meant for innocent Amusements, and necessary Unbendings, are now become a *Trade*; nor has Prudence and Innocence much share, in what are called the fashionable Gaieties, and high Taste of this polite Age. If People have a mind to be merry, but withal wise and innocent, they must not be out of Temper to be laughed at, as dull insipid *Mortals*. Every Thing that has the least Appearance of Gravity, is by the little *Dapper-wits* of the Age, called Affectation or Stupidity. *Chastity* in the *Fair* is called *Prudery*, Modesty *bad Breeding*, and in both Sexes, Devotion is thought Hypocrisy, or great *Weakness*. In short, Religion in general is looked upon as *Priestcraft*, or at best a political Invention; and the most *disinterested* Virtue is branded with every reproachful and ignominious Title. This is the exalted and refined Taste of those weak unthinking Men, who, by a strange Infatuation and Abuse of Words, call their own Profaneness, *Free-thinking*; Licentiousness, *Gaiety*; Luxury and Extravagance, *Taste*; and unlawful Pleasures, *in-*
offensive

offensive *Amusements*. Unhappy Britain! How art thou fallen from thy ancient Glory? And how is the *native* Bravery, and manly Sense of thy once renowned Sons dastardly dwindled into the most odious Effeminacies, and the most astonishing Security? For God's Judgments so lately threatened, and so unexpectedly removed, serve only to confirm this Nation in more secure and hardened Impieties; and forasmuch as these Judgments seem, to unthinking Men, to be wholly withdrawn, they laugh at the Dangers already escaped, and fondly cry out, *Peace, Peace*; imagining no other future Calamities will ever overtake them. We behold therefore, in the History of our *own Times*, the Truth of what I have all along asserted (*viz.*) that some Men are not to be reclaimed by any judicial Punishments which God, in this World, can inflict upon his Creatures. And the same may be affirmed of those temporal Punishments which are either the natural Consequence of a dissolute Life, or such as are inflicted by the *State* upon notorious Offenders.

With Respect to such temporal Calamities as are the natural Consequences of a dissolute Life, these are of no other Use, to some Men, but to make them repeat greater Enormities, than those which called down those Calamities upon them.

For Instance, the Man who by his Follies and Extravagancies has reduced himself to

Poverty and Distress, is so far from learning Wisdom from these Calamities which were the natural Effects of his own Profuseness, that he frequently uses every scandalous and dishonest Means to support his Extravagance still longer: To former Profuseness, he will add *Fraud*: To *Fraud*, *Robbery*: To *Robbery*, *Perjury*: To *Intemperance*, *Sottishness*: To *Folly*, *Madness*: And at last (thro' Cowardice or Pride) closes the *sad Scene* of a miserable dissolute Life, with a *Pistol*, a *Dagger*, or the *poisonous Bowl*. This is a Truth so very notorious, that scarce a Week passeth, but a tragical *Murder* of this kind is committed in this very Kingdom. Nor need we wonder at the Matter, so long as Men are taught to disbelieve the * *only Argument* that can restrain the perverse Sinner from the most crying Vices. The *School* of temporal Adversity is, no doubt, wisely and mercifully meant to teach Men

that
 * What other Argument so likely to restrain Men from laying violent Hands upon themselves, as the Thoughts of plunging the next Moment into greater Miseries, than those which make them commit this horrid Act? Whereas if Men are made believe that Death puts an End to every Suffering, what Man labouring under any Calamity, would not rid himself at once out of it? So that by this means there would soon but few Men be left, because there are, I believe, few Men living, who are not, one Time or other, acquainted with Grief. Therefore let the Reader judge how much the Community is beholden to those Writers who have invented a *Remedy*, by the Use whereof there would not be one single Object struggling with Misery left alive, unless those helpless Infants who are yet *unable* to put a Knife to their Threats.

that *Lesson* of practical Wisdom, which, while rolling in ease and gay *Delights*, they are wilfully deaf to. Some indeed do greatly profit in this *Academy* of severe Discipline; but others are stubborn, refractory and invincible to the last. In Prosperity they wantonly kick against the bounteous Hand that feeds them, and in Adversity they turn out more outrageously wicked; and instead of humbly acknowledging, that it was their own impious Folly that was the natural Cause of their well-deserved Calamities, they blasphemously ascribe their Misfortunes to Providence, or *blind Chance*, and then plunge into Eternity with a horrid Imprecation in their Mouths, cursing God, and dying by their own rash Hands. This, God knows, is the only Effect which those Calamities that are the natural Result of Pride, *Extravagance* and Profuseness, too often produce. And with Respect to those piteous and loathsome Diseases which are the bitter Fruits of a debauched and voluptuous Life, some Men indeed, (whose good Luck it is to survive these noisome Maladies) are taught from thence a Lesson of Prudence and better Conduct for the Future: But there are still greater Numbers, who are no longer to be restrained from *Acts* of Lewdness, than while they feel the Punishment and Torture to which their Incontinency naturally exposes them. While they are in Agony they will lament their *Debaucheries*, condemn their Folly, and

and make the most *solemn* Protestations of future Amendment, in Case they should be recovered from their excruciating Tortures. But when Health and Vigour return, all their former Protestations vanish; they seem to have stupidly lost the very Remembrance of their late agonizing Pains, they neither regard the Danger they were in, nor consider the Folly and Impiety of running wilfully into the same again. This is a *melancholy* Truth which *those* Gentlemen well know, whose Business it is to attend the *public Lazar-houses* of human Nature, under that *sad* Variety of Ills, which is shocking even to behold; and the more so when it is remembered that these piteous *Maladies* are what the People who groan under them, wilfully and *repeatedly* brought upon themselves.

But still great as this Misery, naturally attending habitual Intemperance and Incontinency is, yet this *present* Punishment of Vice deters not all, and recovers but few from those enchanted Paths which lead the unwary *Liber-tine* to certain Destruction. The Difficulty, nay and even Impossibility, of reclaiming the thoughtless *Incontinent*, is most pathetically described by *one*, whose exalted Wisdom had been fatally led astray in the bewitching Paths of *soft, seducing Pleasures*: *Her House inclineth unto Death, and her Paths unto the Dead* *.

None that go unto her return again, neither *take*

* Prov. ii. 18, 19.

take they hold of the Paths of Life: And in another Place he thus advises, *My Son, let not thine Heart decline to her Ways, go not astray in her Paths.* For she hath cast down many wounded: Yea, many strong Men have been slain by her. For her House is the Way to Hell; going down to the Chambers of Death. But yet neither the Misery nor Danger annexed to a dissolute Life in this present World, are sufficient to reclaim the headstrong Libertine from the Paths of sensual Gratifications. And the same is equally true with regard to those Punishments inflicted by the State upon notorious Violaters of the Laws, religious or civil. These Punishments may perhaps prevent some Men from running altogether into such Excess of outrageous Enormities, but still, that many Thousands in this Realm bid open Defiance to every Punishment which is in the Power of the State to inflict, is daily more and more apparent. There is a Race of Men, both amongst the great and small *Vulgar*, who are proof against all kinds of Punishments inflicted by the State. *Imprisonment*

* Prov. vii. 25, 26, 27.

† *Tauia rōv Savatou*, The gloomy Conclaves of the pale Tyrant.

‡ I fear this melancholy Truth will in a little while be too visible in the Conduct of some amongst the People of this Land, upon whom Lenity in the Government will work but poor Reformation: For tho' too much Lenity is a pardonable, nay, I had almost said a most amiable Error, yet an Error it is, and, in its Consequence, often becomes Cruelty to the Community in general.

penitence they regard but little; *Banishment* not much, and *Death* least of all *. The horrid Dungeon cannot make them think, nor can Sentence of *Death pronounced*, make them repent. For all the Concern of many of these unhappy invincible Wretches, is to banish Reflection by drowning their Senses with intoxicating Spirits. This *fatal Evil*, the Government has, (by a *late Prohibition* of all strong Liquors, after Sentence of *Death* is pronounced) as much as lies in human Power, guarded against: And happy will it be for the Nation, if this shall be found to diminish the Number of those Robberies and savage Murders which *stun* our Ears every Week, and make human Nature shudder to think of. But all the Punishments and Deaths, hitherto inflicted, have by no Means been able to rouse the Criminal from his hardened Insensibility; and the most notorious Villains meet their Fate at the Gallows with such stupid *Intrepidity* and avowed Impenitency, as if they were going to suffer Martyrdom in the glorious Cause of Virtue and Religion, instead of a shameful Death for wilfully transgressing the Laws of God and Man. And as the most agonizing Deaths

which
* Formerly *Death*, to the abandoned impenitent Sinner, was looked upon as the fearful Beginning of his Miseries; but we are now presented with a new consolatory System which affirms that the most atrocious Delinquents, Assassins and Suicides, will, the Moment they pass out of Life, enter into Bliss and endless Glory. (*Heaven open to all Men.*)

which human Powers can invent or inflict, cannot so much as infuse *one* penitent Thought into the *flinty* Bosom of some confirmed Sinners, even when those Sinners are the very next Moment to plunge into the eternal Horrors of another World, much less do these temporal Punishments answer the wise Ends proposed by deterring the *Spectators* from committing the like, or greater Crimes. Nay, nothing is more common than *Theft* committed, while a *Thief* is a Dying; and while one Malefactor is bleeding, another *hardened* Wretch will repeat the same Crime; and the Execution of one Villain, paves the Way for others to transgress, and to suffer after the like dreadful Manner. Nor is this stupid invincible Impiety confined to the *lowest* and illiterate Part of the Nation, for then the Misfortune of a bad Education would, in some Measure, extenuate the Crime; but this unconquerable Perverseness is too often visible in Men of good Birth, and who have had the Advantage of no mean Education. And were I disposed to dwell upon this *unwelcome Topic*, I could produce Instances of this kind not a few: How many Men, whose Infancy has been trained up under the pious Precepts of the best of Parents, whose *youthful Steps* have been directed by the same prudent Guides, and whose Education throughout, has been every Way suitable to form the Man of Sense and of sound Morality, and yet, after all these

best

best of rational Methods, they have stifled
 every early Impression of Virtue, and cast be-
 hind them all the solid and rational Maxims
 given them in their younger Years? And at last
 these *Monsters* of Perverseness and Ingratitude,
 have passed out of Life in the most *tragic*
Manner, bidding Defiance to all the Argu-
 ments that Reason could suggest, or Consci-
 ence administer: *These* therefore, and *such like*
 invincible Sinners, who are blind under every
 Light, and deaf to every Call, are the Men
 who seem (in the very Nature of Things)
 to evince the Necessity of that *alarming Doc-*
trine, which has been, I apprehend, so in-
 contestibly proved in the Progress of this Sub-
 ject. Whether the Number of these *Objects*
 of eternal Wrath be so very great, as has been
 generally imagined, I dare not affirm; but
 that there have been some such invincible
 Sinners in every Age of the World, is an *hi-*
storical Truth too well attested to admit of
 Debate. For it is in this limited Sense, and
 with Regard to the incorrigible Profaneness
 of some perverse Minds, that human Nature
 has *always* been nearly the same in every Age
 of the World. But still this incorrigible Per-
 verseness of some Individuals, is not to be
 charged upon the Species in general; much
 less is the irreclaimable Wickedness of some
 in all former Times, any Excuse for the Vices
 of the present Age, as if it was but just like
 every other before it. This way of arguing,

is supposing that the World is wicked and profane thro' a kind of *unavoidable Fatality*, and that one Age is not worse than another, human Nature being (as some sensual Libertines ignorantly maintain) always the same. But that this is an impious Untruth, invented to soothe and to keep every Age in Countenance, into whatever Enormities it may *madly* run, is apparently manifest from the History of different Ages and different Nations. Vice has had its *Ebb* and *Flow* ever since the first Man's Fall. And in one Age *this*, and another *that* kind of Folly and Impiety, has been the reigning Taste. Nay and even different Kingdoms, have different Vices, and some Sorts of Impieties peculiar to each other. What those Vices are which are at present peculiar to this Nation I shall not take upon me to affirm; or whether it is at present remarkable for one more than another, would be difficult to determine, at a Juncture when all are become but too common. And were it not an invidious Task to give a Characteristic of one's own Age and Nation, I think with too much Truth it might be said, That *Absence* of Thinking is the *Study*, *Diversions* the *Trade*, *Luxury* the *grand Taste*, the *Art* of Gaming the *chief Science*, and an *avowed* *Contempt* of Revelation the spreading *Religion* of *Britain*. But as it is my Intention to reclaim the Sinner, and not to expose the Vices of my Fellow-Subjects, I shall say nothing farther

farther on this Head at present. Perhaps what has been said already may be falsely deemed the Effect of an uncharitable gloomy Disposition. But the very Thoughts of this I disdain; and if I had not been touched with the most *tender* and charitable Concern for the eternal Interest of my dear Countrymen, I should hardly have given the Reader and myself the Trouble of going through such an awful and difficult Subject as the Doctrine of future Torments: A Subject however which tho' *unpopular*, yet when all the *milder* Methods of Conviction are eternally slighted, I deemed necessary to be inculcated, in order to prevent Mankind from plunging *Unawares* into that Gulph of Perdition, which provoked Justice has prepared for the *malicious, deliberate, and impenitent* Sinner.

S E C T. IV.

THE urgent Necessity of inculcating our Doctrine upon this present Age in particular, with the great Advantages that might from thence be reasonably expected, I will now speak to in few Words. The Necessity of inculcating the Doctrine of eternal Misery upon *impenitent* Offenders, in *one Age*, or at *one Time*, more than another, is greater, or less, in Proportion to the Nature of Men's Vices, and the *Principles* upon which they pretend to commit them. When Vice is
once

once committed upon a pretended Principle, or in a full Persuasion of *future Impunity*, the Danger of such destructive Principles is, at any Rate, to be pointed out. One Principle lately revived with uncommon Assurance is, that the more Men sin the more Grace will abound. Well so it possibly may, but not unless the Man forsakes and repents of his Sins.

And that Passage in St Paul's Epist. (*Rom. V. 20.*) upon which the Authors would willingly found their own mistaken Opinions, is only to shew that the Grace of God, thro' Christ, is far superior to the original Sin of *Adam*. And that by how much soever *Sin might abound thro' the Offence of one*, Justification and Life far more abounded by the perfect Obedience and Sufferings of *One*, that is, of Christ. But then it is evident from the whole Tenor of this Chapter that this very *Grace* of Redemption by Jesus Christ, is conditional, and the Condition, as stated by the Apostle, is sincere *Faith*, as contradistinguished from the *Works* of the Law, by which no Man can be justified. But then *what does Faith avail, if it is unaccompanied by good Works*, and no more than a fruitless Belief? This Sort of Faith is a Contradiction in Terms, as being nothing but a Word without a Meaning. For St James, I should think, must be a better Interpreter of the Christian Faith than these dangerous Scribes. *For as the Body* (says he) *without the Spirit is dead, so Faith without Works is*
C c dead

dead also. And yet for all this Description of a genuine *Faith*, the Author of *Heaven open*, &c. has the Assurance to affirm, that notwithstanding Men have neither Faith nor Works (for there are some People who have neither,) they shall, nevertheless, be all eternally happy in the Regions of Glory: All Mankind, he says, be they the most abandoned and impenitent Sinners, without either Faith in Christ, or Belief in God, shall be Eternally happy. And this destructive Opinion *the Man* pretends further to establish upon that Expression (*Rom. XI. 26.*) *all Israel shall be saved*; whereas it is as evident as St Paul himself could speak it, that *all Israel* means none but the *true Israelites*. For *they* (says the Apostle, Chap. ix. 6.) *are not all Israel, which are of Israel* (i. e.) all the Descendants of *Jacob*, were not good Men, nor were all the Children of faithful *Abraham* Heirs of the Promise, because they did not all walk in the Steps of *Abraham's* Faith. So that this mischievous Notion of Heaven's being open to the most *atrocious* Sinners, whether they repent or not, is founded either in the Malice of the Author, or his gross Ignorance of the true Scope and Design of every individual Text in Scripture, which he adduces in Support of his consolatory System. But still, impious and absurd as this Opinion is, *Numbers* of Men are very readily disposed to take the poisonous gilded Pill off his Hands.

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He *hallo's* out to all, the Gates of Heaven will ever be open; he makes them believe he has found out that great *Panacea* which will cure all Diseases alike, *whether curable or incurable*, and without Cost or Pains. But whether this Medicine, which pretends to cure all Distempers that human Nature either has been, is, or can be subject to, will not, like most other quack Medicines, kill more than it cures, I leave to the Reader's serious Reflection. And since such pernicious Books are suffered to be made public, I think it is the Duty of every Minister of the Gospel, *to guard*, as much as in him lies, the People committed to his Charge, from the spreading Infection of such destructive Errors: And the more so, as the present Age seems mighty willing to embrace every Appearance of an Argument, that can footh Men in Sin, and keep Folly and Impiety in Countenance. And as the Nation at present is sunk into the most dangerous of all States, that of careless *Security*, it is incumbent upon every spiritual *Watchman* in the Land to sound an *Alarm*, and, if possible, to awaken the unthinking Sensualist from the fatal Pillow of enchanting Pleasures. The most effectual Remedy to do this is, I apprehend, by urging Home that awful Argument, that *Terror* of the Lord, by which the Apostle persuaded Men. Nothing but the well-grounded Belief of a

Judgment to come, can make the careless Sinner think and tremble; and careless secure Sinners were never, I believe, in greater Numbers since the Gospel was openly preached and openly professed, than at present. This Doctrine of a future irreverfible Sentence to be pronounced at the *general* Judgment upon the unbelieving Impenitent, is an Argument fo alarming to every *tender Senfe*, that a Man muft be loft to Self-love and Self-prefervation, the *primary* Laws of Nature, who can be deaf and inattentive to fo important a Subject. For the Tendernefs of our Frames, our natural Dread of Pain in general, and fluddering Abhorrence of every *lafting* Torture, are too nearly interefted not to be a little touched at the Apprehenfion of eternal Mifery, let that *Mifery* be what it will; whether of Body and Mind jointly, or feparately of either. And was this certain Truth once as univerfally believed, as it is the Intereft of all Men *firmly* to believe it, perfuaded I am, that Men would not make fuch a Mock at Death, nor plunge into Eternity with a kind of *Triumph*, as if all was then over, and that they fhould either utterly ceafe to exift, and confequently have no more Senfation either of Pleafure or Pain, or, in Cafe they fhould be fuffered to exift, enter immediately into the Joys of Paradife. But when it was once the general Perfuaſion that Death, to the

the hardened profane Wretch, was not the *End*, but the *Beginning* of his Torments, Men would not then so sottishly play away their Lives, nor by an abandoned Course of Thefts, Robberies, and horrid Murders, so knowingly expose themselves to capital Punishments, and all under this *devilish* Delusion, that it will be but one Struggle at the Block, or the Gallows, and then the Business finally ended. Whereas if this awful Doctrine was universally inculcated upon the Minds of the People, if the Certainty, nay, and even Necessity of it, was clearly proved, (as it actually may be from sacred and profane History) if this most striking Truth was earnestly recommended by every public Teacher to the Consideration of his *Parish*, and with a Seriousness and a * Discretion becoming

Great Prudence is certainly requisite in urging this alarming Doctrine, and we ought to be very cautious what Crimes or what Sinners we affirm to be Objects of this fearful Sanction, lest by being over-hasty in pronouncing this tremendous Sentence upon almost every Offender, we curse those whom God hath not cursed. For tho' this Doctrine is undoubtedly true of some Objects; yet for any Man to affirm with Precision, *that* those Objects may be, will justly draw upon himself the Hiss of all sober People, and bring the Doctrine itself into Disbelief and Contempt. To prove the Truth and Necessity of this Doctrine in general Terms is incumbent upon all public Teachers; and *this* being done, the Application, as to particular Objects, should be left at large. For when the Truth of this alarming Doctrine is once allowed and believed, every one, who has the least Degree

becoming such an important Subject, it would, I think, in a great Measure deter the headstrong Sinner from those *greater* Crimes at least of private Fraud and Oppression, Perjuries, Rapes and Adulteries, Thefts and Robberies, with those shocking Scenes of the most horrid Murders, that almost every Day *defile the Land with Blood*, and call aloud for Vengeance. For what a Check would the Thoughts of dwelling with everlasting Burnings be upon the Minds of Men, when they were going to commit any notorious and crying Sins? How would this *Damp* the Adulterer's over-heated Passions, and *restrain* the fraudulent Oppressor of the Fatherless and Widow? With what trembling Horror would the Thief and the Murderer be seized, at the Thoughts of committing a Crime, which by *human* Laws would soon deprive him of Life, and after Death expose the irreclaimable Sinner to far greater Tortures than *human* Powers can invent or inflict? This awful Consideration of Eternal Misery would be some restraint upon the most resolute Villain; and tho' he should have worked himself up into that *mock* kind of Heroism as to defy any *temporal* Death that his Crimes might expose him to, yet of Self-love or Tenderness, will, of himself, be very circumspect over his Conduct, lest he should be an *Object* of this fearful Sentence, *Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting Fire, &c.*

yet even *Self-love*, and a natural Aversion to Misery and Pain, would make him fear that *tremendous Being*, who after the Body of the profane Sinner is killed, *both Power to cast into Hell*, and to punish the hardened Offender, not with a *temporal*, but an *eternal* Death. And did but a Man now and then seriously meditate upon this interesting Subject, *lesser Sins* indeed he might, and could not perhaps avoid committing, but I *defy* him to be guilty of any notorious Crimes without the greatest Remorse and bitter Condemnation of an accusing Conscience. And tho' a Man should, under some violent *Temptation*, be guilty of any of the *greater* Crimes, yet it would be actually impossible for him, if he believed in a future State at all, not to condemn himself for his Folly the very moment *Reflection* returned, and Conscience and Reason again resumed their *just* Prerogative. The Apprehension of never-ending Pain, would be a more powerful Restraint upon the Sinner's Conduct, than all the temporal Punishments which human Laws can inflict. For even the greatest Tortures which can be inflicted upon capital Offenders, may be, and generally are despised by those profligate Wretches who think nothing about a future State; and if so, be they can but support themselves in Sloth, Intemperance and Debauchery in *this World*, they neither care what Crimes they commit,

nor how often they repeat them, because it is but a short struggle of Pain at the last, and then Death, as these poor deluded Men are taught to believe, will put an utter End either to them, or to their Punishments. But were these Objects of *National Reproach*, and of real Pity to every tender Mind, once instructed in the Doctrine of future Torments upon all irreclaimable Sinners, did these Men firmly believe that a *severe* Account was to be given in another World, if they plunged into Eternity hardened and impenitent, we should then behold them pass out of Life with Dread and Horror at the *least*, tho' not perhaps with true Repentance. And this Dread and Horror of condemned Criminals at the Place of Execution, would strike greater Terror (as arising from the inward Conviction of the Malefactor) into the Minds of the Spectators, than the Torture of the Execution itself. And it is owing to this *habitual* Contempt of a future State, that for many Wretches, when brought to the fatal Fire, even *Laugh* at the Death they are going to suffer, and plunge into the other World with such an Air of *affected* Courage, and hardened Impiety, as does no small Honour amongst the unthinking *Mob*, who, from the stupid Insensibility of the suffering Malefactors, conclude there is nothing at all in dying at the Gibbet, much less in entering into

into a State where, as they impiously imagine, both the Man and his Crimes will vanish into eternal Oblivion. How much therefore this must harden and confirm the ignorant Spectators, and how apt an Execution of this *Nature* will be to increase, not diminish the Number of Robberies and Murders, may be easily conjectured. Nor can any other Remedy, that I know of, cure these unthinking Wretches, and reclaim them from their abandoned Courses, but that of pressing upon their Minds those *Terrors* of the Lord, by which we are, in some Degree, enabled to persuade the most obstinate Men. There is one other great Advantage which a firm Belief of a future State must certainly procure to the Community, by putting a Stop to that horrid, and *irretrievable Crime* of Self-murder. For let a Man labour under whatever temporal Calamities he will, let him be ever so miserable and depressed, either by Misfortunes (sent for our Good) or by his own Follies; yet he would not dare to rid himself out of these *temporal Calamities* by his *own* wicked Hands, if he did but consider that by so doing he plunged headlong into *endless Torments*. And tho' a Person under the Weight of temporal Calamities, would not, upon any *religious Motives*, demean himself with a manly Fortitude and becoming Patience, yet if he had any *Tenderness* for his own Frame, he would

would never, by committing one cruel Death upon himself in *this World*, expose his Soul to *another* of a far more dreadful Nature. The very Thoughts of a Man's leaving the World in Tortures inflicted by his *own Hands*, and opening his Eyes in eternal Torments the *next Moment*, would make him fling away the *accursed Pistol*, break the *unlawful Dagger*, and fall down *immediately* in Prayer before that merciful God, whose Arms are ever open, and will never *send any Temptation*, but will with the Temptation make a Way for all his Creatures to escape and overcome it. The Prevention therefore of Self-murder would be one great Advantage, amongst a thousand others (had I Time to enumerate them) arising from a firm Belief of future Torments. And as the Belief of this solemn Truth would be attended with so many great Advantages to the State, it is much Pity but this alarming *Sanction* of the divine Laws, was more *universally* urged, and more *seriously* believed. For till the Belief of this awful Doctrine becomes thoroughly established, all temporal Expedients will be to very little Purpose: And the great Legislature of this Realm may enact ten thousand Times more *penal Laws* than are already in being, and yet little or no Regard will be paid to these human Laws till Obedience to the *divine Mandates* be better secured, and these *fearful Punishments*, in Case of wilful

and

and repeated Transgression, gain more universal Credit amongst the *Great* and the *Gay*. For notwithstanding the *august State* of this Kingdom enacts some new and wise Laws every Session, for the Punishment of *Wickedness and Vice*, and for the Maintenance of true Religion, and *Virtue*, still if the great Barrier of Religion, and the most powerful Sanctions of all Laws, human and divine, be suffered to be wantonly thrown down, not only with Impunity, but * Applause, our Wonder

* Witness the numerous Impressions of *Heaven* open to all Men, and the great Veneration paid by many to the pious Labours of Mr. David Hume, especially his holy *Essay upon Miracles* in which he modestly requires no other Evidence for the Truth of a Miracle, but such a one as none can possibly have, but the Man himself who works the Miracle. So that according to this Gentleman, Miracles are like the *whits Stone* in the Apocalypse, which none can understand, or read, but the very Person to whom it is given. As to my own Part, I was always so weak as to think, that the Gospel Miracles (for it is for these only that all *sober* Christians are or ought to be concerned) were wrought to propagate the Christian Religion, and for the Conviction of those unbelieving Jews, or Gentiles, before whom these *evidential* Miracles were wrought; and that those Persons before whom these Miracles were really performed, might safely enough trust their own Senses, and be allowed to be competent Judges whether they had lost their Eyes or not. But this Mr. Hume won't allow; neither will this *mighty Sceptic* believe any one Thing, the Truth of which himself has not experienced. This Gentleman won't believe the Omnipotence and Infinity of the great *first Cause*, unless he had grappled with the one, and by his *Scale and Compass* measured the other. He is for examining metaphysical Truths by

Weight

Wonder may cease should we live to hear that the great Legislators of the Nation are insulted.

Weight and Measure, and won't admit of one Miracle till it has been severely try'd in the wondrous *Elaboratory* of this *theological Chymist*. Now this experimental Sophist would do Christianity, and the Cause of Truth in general, *real Service*; if he would confine his Experiments to *that Church* where a Power of working Miracles is at this very Day falsely affected; and where Men are habitually taught from their Infancy to believe the grossest Absurdities, and to swallow down for a Miracle, the *Legends* of every holy Impostor.

Had Mr. Hume, I say, made present *Italy* the Scene of his Experiments, and tried the *Forgeries* of modern *Rome* by his own Criterion, he would have detected many gross Impositions of that superstitious corrupted Church; but when this experimental Writer would apply the same Rule to the *Gospel Miracles*, wrought many Ages before Mr. Hume was in Being, he seems to forget what Absurdities he falls into. For if, according to this Writer, no Man can be a Judge of the Truth of the Gospel Miracles, but the *Miracle Worker*, then it would follow, that before any Man could be made a Convert to Christianity, by the Force of *evidential Miracles*, he must have a Power to work these Miracles; and not, as one would think, for the Sake of convincing *other Men*, but himself: So that there must of Necessity have been as many *Miracle Workers*, as Christian Converts: But the sober Reader need not be told how cheap and contemptible all Miracles would, by this means, quickly be rendered. And when Mr. Hume requires such kind of Evidence for the Truth of the Gospel Miracles, as it is impossible, in the Nature of the Thing, to advance, we need go no further for a Proof of this Writer's profound Science in *Metaphysics* and *Theology*. And the Reverend Mr. *Adam* has lately given so good Account of this Gentleman, and his curious *Essay* on Miracles, as to render any Thing which might be further remarked upon this Subject entirely needless.

insulted, robbed and abused, in their Return from the *Senate-House*, and all this in downright Contempt of those very Laws, they have been wisely enacting. Where these Matters will end demands the most serious Attention of the ruling Powers in the *State*. They are called upon by all the most sacred Ties of *Love* to their *Country*, to themselves, and to their *Prince*, Reverence of God and of his Laws, to countenance every *practical rational* Method towards a *National* Reformation. The most powerful of all human Expedients would be, as I humbly apprehend, the Sanction of their own illustrious and *striking* Example.

SECT. V.

NOTwithstanding the Necessity of the *tremendous Sanction* (with Regard to some of God's Creatures) has been at least negatively demonstrated, by shewing the Weakness and Insufficiency of all *finite Expedients*, yet I am well aware how many Objections will be started against this *alarming Doctrine* by those Men, whose confirmed Infidelity and enormous Impieties make them so greatly interested to ridicule and oppose a Punishment, of which they themselves may perchance be Objects. And as the Objections against revealed Religion are mustered up with all the Force and Conscience, that the refined

refined Subtlety of our modern Sceptics can suggest, in order that *these Objections* may be remembered, while the *Answers*, (which require of Course somewhat more Words) may be forgotten, I shall endeavour to give in my Answers to the Objections against the tremendous Sanction in as short a Compass as the Nature of the Subject will admit of. The first Objection against the Doctrine of *eternal* Torments, is pretended to be on Account of the commonly received Opinion concerning the Number of the Damned: To which be it replied, That none will fall under the Sentence of eternal Misery, but such as have been, and would to the End of Time still continue to be wilfully and maliciously hardened against every *finite* Expedient: And therefore whether the Number of these invincible Sinners be greater or less, it does not, as is pretended, at all impeach the Goodness of God, because it is a Punishment which the *Objects* of it even forced divine Justice to inflict, and wilfully called down upon themselves in spite of every merciful Method of Conviction a thousand times repeated. And I doubt not but the Objects of this Punishment, will fully discover its *Equitableness*, acknowledge God's Justice in this Affair, and even thank the Almighty that it was not as to its *kind* and *degree* of a more dreadful Nature. May this Answer then suffice for the first Objection.

tion. Next it is said, with a strange metaphysical Jargon, that *finite* Crimes do not merit *infinite* Punishments: The Reply to this Objection is very common (*viz.*) that tho' these Crimes of the *profane Impenitent* are *finite* as to *Time*, yet they are not so as to their *Turpitude*, because they are maliciously and ungratefully committed * against a Being of infinite Majesty, Goodness, Love, and Compassion. But however, lest this Answer may not give Satisfaction, I will venture (with Leave of the fiery vindictive Zealot) to say, that *none* of God's Creatures will be *eternally* miserable, but *those* whom he knew would eternally abuse every Overture of Grace should they be try'd again after Death, and continue to slight all *temporary* Expedients, whether of Gentleness or Severity, the Moment they perceived those Expedients were withholden. Next it is said, but with an *awkward* kind of Compliment to the divine Being, that God's Sovereignty may interpose, and absolutely remit the Punishment of eternal Torments, notwithstanding he has so solemnly denounced them against *incorrigible* Impiety. Well, so God might, if he pleased, suffer *all* his righteous Laws to be perversely trampled under Foot, and yet

* Parce que les Méchans ont offence une Majesté infinie, & qu'il est juste qu'ils soient du moins punis d'une peine infinie en durée. (*Pict. La Theol. Chret. Tom. II.*)

for all this take those invincible Sinners into his Bosom, and reward them with endless Happiness, for wilfully and *maliciously* rebelling against him. But how this absurd Notion of God's Use of his uncontrollable Sovereignty, can be reconciled with his Wisdom and Justice, or secure his Laws from Insult and Contempt, the Authors of the foregoing Opinion must either shew, or frankly own that such an Exercise of Sovereignty would be utterly inconsistent with the Wisdom, Justice, and *Veracity* of the divine Being. By others it has been objected, that the Doctrine of eternal Torments is irreconcilable with infinite Mercy. To which it may be reply'd, That tho' God's Mercy be infinite, it is not a mere * *necessitated* Attribute,

* If the Deity be (and it would be as ridiculous as impious to say that he is not) an all-powerful uncontrollable *Free Agent*, then certainly it is in his Power either to shew Mercy or to execute just Judgment: It is the very *essential* Property of *free Agency* to *do* or to *forbear*; and therefore it would be a most palpable Contradiction, to affirm, that an *omnipotent* Free Agent cannot but shew Mercy to the most confirmed and *outrageous* Offenders. The Almighty has an indisputable Right to dispense his Mercy *when, how, and to whomsoever* he pleaseth. *Sunt omnia juri Dei omnium Domini subjecta. Deus solus plenam habet ac liberam Juris sui potestatem, solus etiam de jure suo remittere quibus voluerit, potest. Remittit illis quorum miseretur, quos, si vellet, jure suo perdere posset. Nec est ut in jus vocatur cur id faciat. Nemo illi sine enormi impietate, dicere poterit, cur me fecisti sic? Cur non melius de me statuisti? Dominus est. (MUSCUL. de Potest. & Dominio Dei.)*

Attribute, which it is not in the Power of God *not* to extend to the most hardened and impenitent Sinners, and even to all eternal Ages. Was God's Mercy in this Sense infinite, and *unconditional*, it would then cease to be any Mercy at all; because in this Case the most notorious and incorrigible Sinners who go into Eternity in open Enmity to God, would not thank him for admitting them to Pardon, forasmuch as it would be no more than what he was obliged to do, in Consequence of his *necessitated* unconditional Mercy. But I apprehend the Patrons of the foregoing Objection will hardly affirm, that God's Mercy is infinite in such an absolute and unconditional Sense. For if God cannot but admit the most hardened and impious Wretches to Pardon, why should he so often declare that all such profane and incorrigible Sinners are an Abomination in his Sight? If they are, it seems very absurd for God to receive them into his Arms, even when they leave the World in professed and open Contempt of his righteous Laws. And to say that hardened and profane Sinners are not an Abomination, or at all displeasing in God's Sight, is such a strain of Blasphemy as one would not expect from the Mouth of any *sober* Deist, or *serious* Heathen. So that the Doctrine of eternal Torments is by no Means irreconcilable with infinite Mercy, if considered as a *Perfection*, as a free and

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gracious Act, and not as mere mechanical and necessitated Goodness. Besides, tho' God's Mercy is, like all his other glorious Attributes, infinite in itself, it is not, nay, I apprehend it cannot be infinitely and unconditionally extended to the most malicious and *invincible* Sinner. There may be Objects who fling themselves as much out of the Reach of divine Mercy, as Impossibilities and Contradictions are beyond the divine Power to perform. God's Power is infinite, but I presume it is not, nor ever will be (in a strict Sense) infinitely exercised and extended in its full Display. And besides, there is such an inseparable * *Harmony* perpetually reigning amongst the divine Attributes, that one will never attempt to usurp upon the Prerogative of another: Divine Mercy will never so unconditionally interpose in pardoning the incorrigible Sinner, as wholly to exclude divine Justice, which is as infinite, and as much essential to the Deity, as his Mercy and Goodness. And for a further Illustration of this Matter, let the *darling* Attribute of the Almighty be stated and explained in such a distinct Point of Light as to enable us to judge *who are*, and *who are*

not
* And the Misericordian Writers themselves lay their principal Argument upon this mutual Harmony of the divine Attributes, always insisting upon it, that we consider the *holy Attributes of God in Concord and Unity*. (See the Treatise entitled, *The great Love and Tenderneſs of God to his Creature Man*. Page 28.)

not *Objects* of this divine Favour: And first we ought to be very careful how we confound *infinite* Mercy with *general* Providence; by *general* Providence we are to understand that extensive *Benevolence* of the divine Being which, as to this present State, is, for the most Part, indiscriminately shower'd down *upon the just and the unjust*. This divine Munificence our Saviour affirms was extended to all Mankind; and he recommends to his Followers an Imitation of this universal Benevolence, under the Character of *Mercy*. *Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful*: Neither is this the only Passage where *general* Providence, or God's promiscuous Bounty, is exhibited as a *Characteristic* of the adorable Attribute. From whence it is evident that *those* Theologists have, in *this* Respect, done Christianity real Service by logically distinguishing betwixt what they call *Misericordia Generalis, Specialis, Temporaria, and Sem-piterna*. The first is what we may very justly call General Providence, that divine *Munificence* which is promiscuously extended both to the rational and brute Creation, giving Food to Man and Beast, and to the young Ravens which cry unto him. By the second we are to understand God's peculiar Care and Compassion for all such as obey his righteous Laws, *confide* in his unerring Providence, and, under every calamitous Emergency, *flee to the Rock of their Salvation* for

Safety and Protection. The *third* or *Misericordia Temporaria*, is that temporal Forbearance, and Long-suffering of the Almighty which is always liberally extended to the greatest returning Sinners, that the Consideration of this *diffusive Goodness of God* might lead the most notorious Delinquents to Repentance and Amendment of Life. The *fourth* and last Characteristic of the darling Attribute is what School-Divines call *Misericordia Sempiterna*; and this, I presume, is the *peculiar Essence* of the Deity, and is infinite in the very highest *supposable* Sense the Expression can possibly bear. But still granting this, can it be (with Reason) supposed that this *adorable* Attribute is infinite in *such* a Degree as to take into its Arms every *individual* Sinner; not only such as through gross Absence of Thought notoriously offend, but offend even of *malicious Wickedness*; who live in the most atrocious Sins, boast of them to the last, and enter upon the awful *Confin*es of Eternity either with a *sullen* Disregard of provoked Omnipotence, or with an impious Sneer at the Doctrine of future Torments? For that there are some such Monsters of *stupid* Profaneness is, tho' hard to be credited, not to be deny'd. Let then the sober Reader judge whether these *self-deluded* Mortals can, upon any reasonable Hopes, be deemed Objects of that divine Goodness, which, while living, they wantonly abuse, and
which,

which, when a dying, they disdain to implore. For if with great Propriety we pronounce the Salvation of those People in the highest Degree precarious, who, after a long Run of the most *daring* Impieties, fondly opine to strike up a final Peace with offended Heaven by one expiring penitential *Groan*, or dying Request, for *that* Mercy which they can now no longer abuse, what must be the Sentence of those incorrigible Sinners, who won't even so much as do this, but ridicule the Doctrine of Repentance as a childish insignificant Duty, worthy of none but dastardly Cowards, and gloomy foreboding Mortals? Well, but in the next Place it is pretended, that God's Mercy in admitting the *profane Impenitent* to Pardon, tho' unconditional on the Sinner's Part, it is not absolutely so in itself: For, say these Gentlemen, the Conditions of his being admitted to Pardon are the Merits and Sufferings of Christ. What Pity it is that the grand Atonement should be thus falsely interpreted, and that the precious Death and Passion of that divine Person, who came into the World to preach and to practise the most *exalted* Righteousness, should be so wickedly and ungratefully perverted, as to encourage Men in Sin, *that the Grace of this Redemption might abound more and more.* Well but, say these Men, either Christ died for the Sins of the whole World, or he did not: To the

affirmative I agree, namely, that Christ did die for the Sins of the whole World; and that his Merits were, in themselves, more than sufficient to atone for the Sins of all Mankind. But it is as true that all Men do not deserve or even desire to be Partakers of the Benefits of this grand Atonement: And notwithstanding the Righteousness of the great Redeemer is imputable to all the Descendants of *Adam*, yet it does not from hence follow, that it will be actually imputed to all; and that the glorious Benefits of Christ's Death will be intruded upon Men whether they will or no. It is certainly one Thing to say that Christ died in order to save all, and another to say that all will actually be saved. For tho' all have it in their Power to be finally happy, yet it is too manifest, all do not embrace the merciful *Privilege*. Not that any will eternally perish because the grand Atonement was insufficient, but because they perversely abused the Merits and Sufferings of Christ, and, in so doing, wilfully flung themselves out of the Covenant of Grace and Salvation. Let not therefore the *darling* Attribute of the Almighty, nor the grand Atonement of his Son, be any more so ignorantly misapply'd as to sooth Men in Sin; much less let any Man magnify God's Mercies at the Expence of his Justice and Truth, or so far extol the Benefits of our Saviour's Passion as to tempt ignorant,

ignorant, disingenuous Minds to persevere and die in the most notorious Sins, under these dangerous, delusive Hopes, that "where Sin abounds, Grace (in this false Construction) will much more abound." It is likewise farther urged by some Men, who at any Rate will quarrel with every Thing they don't approve, that the eternal Punishment, even of the most notorious Sinners, is an Impeachment of God's Wisdom and Goodness, forasmuch as this eternal Punishment, is inflicting a greater Evil upon the human Species, than the Benefit conferred in the Creation of Man. But what Person in his Senses ever dreamt, much less can prove, that the divine Being designed to inflict such Evils upon persevering sinful Man, as would exceed those glorious Benefits prepared for him, in Case he had rightly employ'd the Powers with which his bounteous Creator had enabled him to avoid those Evils threatened, and to obtain those promised Benefits? And tho' it may be said *that there is nothing good or desirable in Being, when it only serves to be a Foundation of the greatest Misery*, yet how does this affect the Doctrine of eternal Misery? Sure this great Prelate * for whose

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Memory

* This illustrious *Champion* of the Protestant Church has, in other Passages, delivered himself in Terms that by no means Favour the Misericordian Scheme. He has bestowed several Pages to prove that *the future State* of Man, both with Respect to Rewards and Punishments, is

Memory I entertain no small Veneration; could never mean, that Man by being called into Existence, was thereby rendered unavoidably a Captive to eternal Misery; much less could he think, that Man's having it in his Power to be eternally and beyond Description happy, was not as great a *Good* as the *Evil* which was threatned, in Case he should wilfully incur that Evil, and in Spite too of a thousand merciful Warnings given him to avoid it. But yet this is the true State of the Case: Man was originally created to be eternally happy, he has it abundantly in his Power so to be; and if he will, for all this, choose Death sooner than Life, who is to blame, God that created him for eternal Glory, and daily assists, encourages, and presses upon him to accept it, or Man, who disdains it with a stubborn and invincible Perverseness? But, say the Enemies to this Doctrine, God foresaw, long before Man was created, that many of his Creatures

would, is fixed and unalterable: And in Relation to the State of the *Damned*, these are his Words; "As to the State of
 " the *Damned*, that that also is immutable the Scripture
 " seems plainly enough to assert, when it calls it an ever-
 " *lasting Destruction from the Presence of the Lord*, and
 " uses such Expressions to set forth the Continuance of
 " their Misery, as signify the longest and most *interminable*
 " Duration; Expressions of as great an Extent, as those
 " which are used to signify the eternal Happiness of the
 " Blessed; and as large and *unlimited* as any are to be
 " had in those Languages wherein the Scriptures are
 " written." (Abp. Tillotson on Luke xvi. 19, 20.)

would, in spite of every temporary Method of Conviction, plunge headlong into eternal Misery, and therefore these * *Apocryphal* Divines stick not to assert, that God ought not to have created *Man* at all, unless he had put it entirely out of his Power to transgress. What miserable Delusions do the wisest of Men fall into, when they once forsake the Scriptures of eternal Truth, and pretend to fathom the Depths of infinite Wisdom by the short Line of human Understanding? For besides the manifest Absurdity of depriving a Probationary, rational Being, (as Man is allowed on all Hands to be) of free Agency, how little would such an animated Piece of Clock-work bespeak the wise Contrivance of the divine Workman? Had Man been deprived of the Freedom of choosing and acting, where would have been his Virtue? And without Virtue, what Merit? And without some degree of Merit, how would either the Goodness or Wisdom of God have appeared in rewarding such a *necessitated Agent* for doing what was out of his Power not to do? And further, were God to have deprived all Men of the Liberty of Willing, because he foresaw some would sottishly abuse it, it would be just as prudent and equitable to have created all Men dumb, because some would abuse the Gift of Speech. But surely it would be a very hard Restraint upon the Deity

* See 2 *Esdra*s Chap. vii. 46.

Deity to tie up his Hands from creating any Beings at all, or communicating infinite Happiness and Glory to the various Beings thus created, because some of them would not answer the great and wise Ends of their Creation *. But yet this is the whole Amount of this last Objection against the Doctrine of eternal Torments; And with so many Absurdities is this, and the Rest of the Exceptions against this awful Doctrine crowded, that they throw more Stumbling-Blocks into our Way, than the Doctrine which they pretend to condemn: And while these Men seem, in their Objections at least, so mighty zealous for *some* of God's Attributes, they either ignorantly or designedly offer *great Violence* to the Rest; and at the same Time that they magnify his Mercy and Goodness, they wholly forget his Wisdom and Justice †. In short, these Men, whether they know it or no, wrest God's mighty Prerogative out of his Hands; they assume to themselves the *Direction* of his Mercy, and the *Exercise* of his Justice: One, they insist upon to be infinite, and unconditionally extended to all; but the *other* they won't suffer so much as to interpose, even in the *just Punishment*

* This Objection, as well as most of the Rest, proves too much, and therefore proves nothing at all.

† Yet this they call *applying Reason to the holy Attributes of God in Concord and Unity*. (See the Tract called, *The great Love and Tenderness of God to his Creature Man*.)

nishment of the most *profane* and invincible Sinner. Thus much therefore with Regard to those Objections against the tremendous Sanction, as they relate to the divine Being, and his adorable Attributes. I shall just consider one or two more that are urged with Respect to the Description and Misapplication of this awful Doctrine. It is objected, that some Divines have described the future Torments of the damned in such *gross offensive Terms*, and under such ridiculous Imagery, as to have brought the Doctrine itself into Contempt; and upon that Account indisposed many thinking Men from embracing it. But I would fain know how this awful Truth can be any ways affected by the Indiscretion of *those* who describe it? And if some over-curious Inquirers will entertain the World with a *local* Hell, and take upon them to fix the *Scene* of future Torments in *this* or *that* particular Place, some in the Sun, others in the burning Bowels * of the Earth,

* This ridiculous Opinion of a *local* Hell, and making the interior Parts of the Globe the *Dungeon* of the Damned, is not only chargeable upon some over-zealous Advocates of the *tremendous Sentence*, but is fondly maintained by the Opposers of this Doctrine, and upon this Account it can neither make for nor against the Doctrine itself. One modern Denier of the *tremendous Sanction* has the following absurd Description of a *local* Hell; *An interior Sun, and an interior Earth, are inclosed by the Globe which we inhabit, which is nothing but an Arch or Shell. (Itane Vir Bone!) That this interior Earth does*
not

Earth, this only shews the Folly of *such* Men; but can't, in Reason, be any sort of Objection to the Scripture Doctrine of future Torments. As to the Nature of these Tortures, the Manner in which, and by what particular Instruments they will be inflicted, let it suffice us that the Scriptures have given this general Intimation, that in Duration they will be endless, and in Degree infinitely great. And that these future Tortures might alarm the *whole Man*, and rouse up every Passion of Self-love, Tenderness and Fear. Revelation paints them under such Figures of Anguish and Horror as are most *excruciating* and dreadful to the Senses, such as *Fire unquenchable, the never-dying Worm, &c.* And it is for the Interest of the notorious Sinner to believe these future Tortures in their literal and most *affecting* Sense. But if some Men will needs be particular in their Descriptions of eternal Torments, if they will introduce the whole Imagery of heathen Mythology into this Christian Doctrine, it may shew their own Ignorance and Zeal, but it ought not to lessen the Credit of this most awful Truth: Neither need Men rack their Invention, to represent the Torments of the Damned under more alarming Figures than

not revolve upon its own Axis; and therefore one half of it enjoys perpetual Day and eternal Spring, the other is in perpetual Darkness. The first of these he would call Elysium, the other Tartarus. (See a Tract, intituled, *The Script. Account of a future State* considered, P. 14.)

than Revelation has painted them. And whether those Descriptions be literally * or figuratively understood, it abates not one Tittle either from the momentous Truth, or the Horror of those dreadful Torments. It will, God knows, be all one to the miserable Objects of this fearful Punishment, by whatever Means or Instruments *provoked* Omnipotence shall think fit to execute this eternal Torture. The Wrath of God can make the Objects of it as miserable without, as within the scorching Flames. And as the Presence of God's Glory and Approbation makes every Place a *Heaven*, so wherever his *Wrath provoked is*, there is Hell, and there is Torment, without the Intervention of any visible or material Instruments. But since the Scriptures of the New Testament reveal the Doctrine of eternal Torments, it was necessary to represent those future Tortures by some kind of known and experienced Pain and Agony. And as Fire is of all other Tortures which human Nature is acquainted with the most excruciating and horrible to Man's Frame, so it is under this Imagery, unquenchable Fire, that the Word of Inspiration describes the Torments of Hell. And it is equally an Argument of God's Wisdom and

* The learned Reader need not be told in which Sense we are to understand those various Descriptions of future Punishments given in the sacred Writings, such as *Fire unquenchable, the bottomless Pit, the never-dying Worm, &c.*

and Goodness that these Torments are painted in such hideous and dreadful Colours, that the careless secure Sinner might, out of Love and Tenderness to his own Frame, be reclaimed from the Paths of Vice. Another Thing which is said to disgust and to dispose some People from embracing the Doctrine of eternal Misery, is the wrong Application which has, and may be made of this most awful Truth. But I should be glad to be informed how any Doctrine can be wholly set aside, from a *wrong* Use that may be made of that Doctrine: Or how the Indiscretion and fiery Zeal of vindictive Men, can at all affect the Authority of Scripture. It is indeed much to be lamented that any Christian Teacher should be so over-fond of pronouncing the Sentence of eternal Torments upon almost every Crime, nor can I forbear to blush at the vindictive Zeal of my own Order, when I hear them so liberal in the Use of the *Terms* eternal Damnation, Hell-Fire, &c. for notwithstanding these Words are to be found in Scripture, and are there very pertinent and suitable to the subject Matter, yet for us to repeat them too often, and apply them indiscriminately to every wilful Offender, is a trespass upon that Charity and Benevolence which is the *truest* Ornament of our Profession. The great Gentile Teacher held it in a very high Degree uncharitable to do, or say any Thing whereby a weak, or ignorant

ignorant Brother might possibly be offended, or tempted to abuse his Christian Liberty; and by Parity of Reasoning, we should not do or say any Thing that may give Offence to Men who have, or *pretend* to have, a more refined and more delicate *Taste*. We should, if possible, avoid giving Offence in any Thing, *that the Ministry itself be not blamed* for our Indiscretion. But however, if this foregoing Exception to the Doctrine of eternal Torments be of any Force at all, it is of too much, because it equally affects the Truth and Authority of every other Doctrine in the sacred Book. There is not one single Doctrine throughout the whole Scriptures, but what has, one Time or other, been scandalously misapply'd; but yet this Misapplication of any Doctrine, can be no rational Objection against the Doctrine *itself*. We might as reasonably cry down the two noble *Sciences* of Law and Physic, because there may be Villains in the one, and Quacks in the other. This last Objection therefore, by attempting to prove too much, proves nothing at all. For notwithstanding some Men, in their Disquisitions concerning eternal Torments, include almost all as Objects of endless Perdition, but their own Party, this proves nothing more than the *Ignorance* and *Uncharitableness* of such revengeful Minds. And it can't but give great Concern to all *thinking* Men, when they reflect how every
different

different Sect of Christians *narrowly* confine eternal Happiness to their own Fraternity, and as *lavishly* consign over all the Rest of Mankind to never-ending Torments. The Papists almost to a Man, not only blame, but damn the Protestants as Heretics and Infidels. Nay, and even amongst Protestants themselves every different Sect, or at least the *fiery Zealots* in each Persuasion, shut all but *themselves* out of the Kingdom of Glory. And into such impious Absurdities does this *narrow*, uncharitable Turn of Mind hurry Men of different Principles, that if we were to form our Judgments from what Men of opposite Parties say one against another, they will *all* be inevitably damned, but if from what they think, and say of themselves, they will *all* most certainly be saved. From which absurd and impious Procedure, we may however collect *one* very interesting Truth, (viz.) that the Doctrine of eternal Torments is not, in itself, incredible, because Men are no otherwise averse to the Belief of it, than as it relates to *themselves*; for as apply'd to *others*, they are ready enough to acknowledge both its Equitableness and Necessity. So that this uncharitable Conduct of Men of different Religions, in so eagerly pronouncing the Sentence of eternal Misery upon all but *themselves*, is so far from being any Objection against this necessary Sanction of God's Laws, that it greatly

greatly establishes its Credibility, and from the Abuse and Misapplication of this awful Doctrine, its Use is apparently evinced. Neither ought *that* Sentence of eternal Misery, which some ignorant Zealots pronounce upon almost every Crime, and upon every Sinner, to weaken the Force of this eternal Sanction, where it is *justly* deserved, and when all *other* Expedients have been to no Purpose. And that this Sentence will be pronounced upon none, but such as very justly deserve it, we may safely leave to the Mercy of a *compassionate* God: He will consign none of his Creatures over to eternal Wrath, but such as wilfully defied both his Mercy and his temporal Judgements to the last; and whose Rebellion against God would, I presume, break out again, even in the *other World*,

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* I fear the *only* Reason why notorious Sinners do not offend against the divine Laws still more and more, is owing to nothing but their not being suffered to continue any longer in this World: Death indeed deprives the hardened Sinner of all Opportunity of sinning any more in the *Body*, but whether the *Minds* of such irreclaimable Delinquents are not still, as to their *moral* Dispositions, the same, we cannot, I think, absolutely deny. For it is the Sentiment of some Divines, that if God should vouchsafe to continue some perverse Sinners in a State of Probation, even to *Eternity*, they would still to *Eternity* rebel against him. And hence it is but just to infer, that if these invincible Sinners would never cease to offend, they will, in strict Justice, never cease from being punished. And whoever is an Observer of the Conduct of those abandoned Wretches, who are the Pests
of

if Heaven were to give them Respite, and entirely abate the Smart of their Torments. For it is my Opinion, that there is such an inveterate, *contracted* Hatred in some Mens Hearts against the Author of Goodness, and his most equitable Laws, that this Hatred and Perverseness would be no longer restrained from open Rebellion, than while the Rod of Vengeance chastized their Impiety.

Some Men may perhaps argue against this Opinion, from a Presumption that the Eyes of the Sinner's Conscience will be so fully opened when he comes into the doleful Regions of Eternity, as to be thoroughly convinced of the Folly and Baseness of rebelling against the righteous Laws of Heaven: Well, no Doubt but this will be the Case, and the hardened Sinner will then both *see* and *believe*, what once he *laugh'd* at and despised. But what will this fruitless Belief *then* avail him?

of the Community, will find Instances more than enow to countenance the foregoing Sentiments. Do not these miserable Objects offend and *suffer*, suffer and *offend*, growing confirmed in their Vices, and proof against every Punishment which the Laws can inflict? Nothing less than Death can put a Stop to these Mens Crimes; and therefore human Laws are forced to have Recourse to this capital Punishment, not merely, as is thought, *in terrorem*, but as the *only Expedient* to prevent these invincible Sinners from committing other and *greater* Enormities: And whoever interposes in saving the Life of an old confirmed Offender, has seldom any Cause to rejoice, nor has the Community much Reason to be thankful.

him? It will only make him *fear*, not *love* the Author of Goodness: And this Fear will, of *itself*, have *bitter* Torment. The Devils themselves *believe and tremble*; but they still continue implacable Enemies to God and Goodness. Their Belief of God's mighty Power to save and to destroy, works in these reprobate Spirits no sort of Change. Their irreconcilable Hatred and Aversion against the King of Heaven is still the same, and they would, in all Probability, again treasonably conspire against the Supreme Being, were they once more reinstated in Happiness and Glory. This is what most Men readily acknowledge with respect to the fallen Angels: Few seem to think their Sentence of being eternally excluded from Heaven at all too rigorous. And as some Men *maliciously* apostatise from God, as they die in open Rebellion against Heaven, and have inlisted under the Banner of the Prince of Darkness, they may, and do grow hardened to every *possible temporary* Expedient. And though Death, and the Horrors of *Gebenna*, will awaken the Fears, alarm the Conscience, and convince the Sinner of his Folly and Impiety, for having thus wilfully plunged into the Gulph of endless Misery, still all this will be only on his *own Account*; it will, it is much to be feared, be nothing but Self-love and Abhorrence of Pain; there will, I doubt, be no *real* Change in the Sinner's Heart;

and where there is no other Alteration in the Mind than the mere Effect of Fear, there can be no *true* Repentance, and where there is no *Place* of Repentance, there can no Pardon, or Remission of Sins be reasonably expected: No, if the Sinner's Heart remains the same, if he leaves the World (as Thousands in all outward Appearance do) under the Load of unrepented Guilt, if all his sensual Passions attend him to the Grave, and the wilful Defilements and Corruptions of the Flesh are all unsubdued when he steps out of Life into the great *World of Spirits*, how can a Being of infinite Purity and Holiness admit such a Man into his Presence? Or if he should, what Happiness could the unrelenting and unalter'd Heart of the Sinner enjoy in the Presence of infinite Purity? None at all, without a Miracle first wrought to change and new create the Man again: But this is as unreasonable to expect, as it would be unworthy of infinite Wisdom and Justice to comply with. No, as the profane invincible Sinner leaves the World, so he must eternally remain.

We have no well-grounded Hopes of any *probationary State* after the Close of this earthly Scene; we are rather assured, that, after Death, there remaineth no more, or other Sacrifice for Sin, than what hath been already offered; and since these miserable Objects of Wrath have abused it, and out-sin-
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ned the Day of Grace, they must now reap the Wages of their Sin and their Folly, Death eternal. And I often wonder how *Origen* could fall into that mistaken Notion of a *second* probationary Period to the Souls of wicked Men after Death, especially as it could not answer the End proposed, and is so flatly contradictory to the Scripture Account of this Matter, which tells us that "*Flesh and Blood*, that is, the sensual Passions of the carnal Man, cannot (in the strict Nature of Things) *inherit the Kingdom of God; neither can this Corruption inherit Incorruption.*"

The last Exception to the Doctrine of eternal Torments is, that the Apprehension of never-ceasing Misery is apt to fill the Sinner's Mind with Dread and Horror, and even to drive some Men, who have long gone on in an infamous Course of Profaneness, into Distraction and Despair: Now the very Design of God's revealing this Doctrine, was for the sake of these abandoned Sinners, and to beget in their Minds a Dread and Horror of those future Torments, but not that *this Horror* of Mind should end in Despair. None can bid Man despair, but the *reprobate Spirit*: He indeed is too hardened, and too proud to repent himself, and therefore endeavours to persuade the profane Sinner, who has long persisted in every notorious

Crime, that eternal Misery will be his unavoidable Portion, *notwithstanding* he repents and forsakes his Crimes. But the Doctrine of eternal Torments is not meant to drive Men into Despair, neither *can it*, if rightly explained, and the Mercy, as well as Justice of God, duly stated. God's Justice indeed is too nearly concerned to let the incorrigible Wretch, whom temporal Expedients cannot make think, finally escape unpunished: But then his favourite Attribute (his Mercy) will always interpose in Behalf of every Object, that will but see the Folly and Ingratitude of wilful Perseverance in Sin, and endeavour, as much as possible, to correct all former Mistakes. Neither can the Doctrine of eternal Torments possibly drive the Sinner into Despair, unless he is resolved to *go on* in wilful Crimes to the last; for if he forsakes his Crimes, and *truly* repents him of his former Sins, in this Case the Doctrine of future eternal Torments can no ways affect him; because he ceases to be an Object of that Sanction any longer. Or even supposing that the subtle Adversary of God and Man, should so far seduce the Sinner, as to make him believe that, in Spite of Repentance and Amendment, the Torments of Hell will be his unavoidable Doom, yet if this, and *this only* does actually drive the Sinner to Despair, it is, I presume, because *that* Sinner thinks his Crimes are too great

great for Pardon; and if this be his real Opinion, great as this Misrepresentation of divine Mercy is, still it being an Error of the Judgement only, and proceeding from the Man's deep Remorse of Conscience and Abhorrence of himself and of his Crimes, *such a one* will certainly meet with a more favourable Sentence, than the hardened profane Wretch, who leaves the World without any Signs of Remorse or Sorrow for a mis-spent abandoned Life. So that this Doctrine of future Torments does not, nay it cannot *in itself* drive the greatest Sinner to Despair, because *that* Sinner, if he will but forsake his Crimes, may avoid, thro' the Mercies of God, that Punishment which so fills his Mind with Horror, and which alarming Truth was revealed in the Scripture for this *very* Purpose, that all those Men who are wilfully deaf to every other Argument, might at last be reclaimed by this *Terror* of the Lord, which was published with a *merciful* Design to reclaim the most abandoned of Men.

Thus have I fully stated, and I hope as fully answered (to all unprejudic'd Minds) every Appearance of an Objection against this awful Doctrine of future eternal Torments. But let one Thing be noticed with regard to the foregoing Objections, that they all come from a very suspicious Quarter: They are made chiefly by Men who are too

much interested against this alarming Truth, as having Reason to apprehend, from their own Conduct, that this Sentence of future Misery may fall upon themselves, unless they change their Conduct for the future. They are, as it were, Parties in this important Affair between God and impenitent Man, and therefore by no Means fit to be Judges in a Cause wherein they are so nearly concerned. And as these Objections against the Doctrine of eternal Torments, shew how fatally Men are lost and bewilder'd when they once forsake the Scriptures, and prefer their own conceited Reasonings to the infallible Oracles of God, it ought to caution every Man from disputing the Truth and Authority of any certainly revealed Doctrine, especially when *that Doctrine* is no less than *one* of the grand Sanctions of God's Laws, and without which the supreme Lawgiver would have left his righteous *Mandates* exposed to the Neglect and Contempt of every perverse and disingenuous Sinner. Besides for Men flatly to deny this solemn Sentence of eternal Punishment, upon so much as one *single* Object of God's Wrath, is casting an impious *Lie* in the Face of Heaven: It is throwing down the strongest Pillar of the divine Law, and setting aside the whole Authority of revealed Religion, by contradicting what is solemnly repeated in the Scripture a thousand Times over. This awful Doctrine God apprized *Adam* of, the Moment

ment he placed him within the blissful Bowers of *Eden*. The Necessity of this Doctrine was fully evinced by the *invincible* Profaneness of the Men of the *old World*, who notwithstanding God *designedly*, and miraculously extended their Line of Life so far beyond the Limits of Nature, yet they remain'd hardened to every Method of Conviction for a thousand Years Continuance: The Necessity of the same Doctrine was still farther manifested in the *Egyptian* Story, and more so in the Stubbornness of the Jews, during their *forty Years* Trial under the Theocracy, that Form of Government where God so *visibly*, and so *immediately* display'd his Indignation at Vice, and Approbation of Virtue. And the lower we have traced the Conduct of human Nature, we have had all along, even to this very *present* Age, still stronger Proofs that there has, in every Period of Time, been some such unhappy incorrigible Men, as would not be reclaimed from Vice by any kind of temporal Expedient. The Truth therefore of this solemn Doctrine, does by no means *wholly* rest upon the Authority of divine Revelation; but the Expediency and Necessity of it has been shewn from well-attested Facts, and from the most authentick Records of several different Ages.

At length therefore we are got to the End of this difficult *Survey* of human Nature. The Road, through which I have been obliged

obliged to lead the Reader, has by no Means been so *pleasant* as might have been wished: And what has made this Road more difficult to myself, and more tedious to him, was, that I found the Track much unbeaten, none, that I know of, having attempted to travel so far in it before. This has render'd the Journey long, hazardous, and irksome: But however, if we do but escape falling into that Pit of Perdition, which has been so often pointed out, in order to stop the headstrong Sinner in his *mad Career* of Vice; and to conduct him at last to a *safe resting Place* of eternal Felicity, I hope none will grudge the Time he has been detained in this gloomy uncouth Journey.

And should this Subject prove the happy Instrument to make my *dear Fellow Britains* think and be *wise*, should it, *perchance*, rouse the Nation from the *downy Pillow of soft, seducing Pleasures*, or reclaim but so much as one *single Soul from the Error of its Ways*, then, had I bestowed as many Years as Months, I should think my Time and Labour gloriously laid out, and most amply rewarded.

The End of the Fourth Book.

DISCUSSION

OF
That most striking Quere of *Maximus*,

Πῶθεν τὸ κακόν.

FROM whence, or from whom, *Evil* at first sprang up in the Creation, has been a Question often asked, but never fully answered: Neither is it, in this *Discussion*, pretended to decide, with absolute Precision, in such an arduous Inquiry, as has exercised, not to say puzzled, the most learned Pens in all Ages. *Maximus*, the Ecclesiastical Writer, composed a Tract (now supposed lost) upon this mysterious Subject, entitled, *Θαυμασιον Ζήτημα* *; and well might that be called the
asto-

* *Maximus* teste *Hieronimo* scripsit, *θαυμασιον ζήτημα*, πῶθεν το κακόν, καὶ ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἢ ὑλῆς ἐδόθη. Vide *SANDII Nuc. Hist. Eccles.* p. 25. *Eusebius* has a Fragment borrowed from this Tract of *Maximus*, which he calls λόγον περὶ τῆς ὕλης. Lib. VII. *Præp. Evangel.* Cap. 21. But who this *Maximus* was, whether it was the Ecclesiastical Writer of that Name, or the *Greek* Philosopher *Maximus Tyrius*, is not altogether so clear. That there was an Ecclesiastical Writer of this Name, is very evident

astomishing Inquest, for Dust and Ashes to fit as an Inquisition upon the Ways of Providence, and to ask *πῶς καὶ τί*, a Question, which, when truly resolved would, I fear, redound very little to the Honour of human Nature. Not that I hereby mean to insinuate, that the Original of *Moral Evil* can any wise be placed to Man's Account. No, far be it from my Thoughts to affix that upon Man as his *Crime*, which is only his deplorable Misfortune. But then granting, out of Reverence to human Nature, that Man, as a *Principal*, had no Share in the Origin of Evil, yet I am much afraid we shall hardly be able so fully to exculpate our common Progenitor, as to leave him wholly unaccessary to *that Evil*, which at first crept into *this* Part of the Creation, the sad Effects whereof are, to this very Day, too visible amongst all the Descendants of *Adam*. The *Mosaic Account* * of the Fall (in Consequence of which every Physical as well as Moral Disorder instantaneously rush'd into these

dent from the Authority just cited, and is farther confirmed by Doctor *Cave* in his *Chartophylax Ecclesiasticus*, Sect. II. p. 17. where he has these Words, *Maximus, Vir insignis claruit anno 196*. What makes it pretty extraordinary is, that the Christian and Heathen Writer should fall exactly in the same Sentiment: *πῶς καὶ τί*, was the Enquiry of one; and *τὸ οὖν καὶ ἀγὰρ τοιούτος, πῶς καὶ τί*, are the Words of the other. Vid. *Maxim. Tyr. Dissert.* 25.

* I hope the Reader will at least Place the *Mosaic Account* of this Matter upon the same Level with other *Historical Narratives*.

these middle Regions) acquaints us, that Man was created a *Free Agent*; excepting that when thus created, he had one single easy Prohibition given him, the true Import of which was, for Man to enjoy without Interruption his present or a *greater Happiness*. For however *some Men* may misrepresent this Prohibition given to *Adam*, not to meddle with a *certain Tree*, as a mere arbitrary Act in the Deity, or purely for the sake of Curiosity, to see how this *favourite Being* would demean himself in his new-erected Empire, still this Misrepresentation proves nothing more than the Ignorance and Perverseness of human Nature now it is fallen: It is only an Argument of what is generally allowed in every other Case, *viz.* that the offending Party is seldom willing to take the Guilt to itself, but will sooner blame the most Innocent, than acknowledge any Error committed by *Self*. Nor does, in my Opinion, the Depravity of *lapsed Nature* appear so manifest in any one Thing, as in that flagrant Propensity to slandering, and *disingenuous* Accusation of others: This ungenerous Crime shewed itself in the Conduct of *Adam*, and his Consort immediately after their fatal Seduction; *The WOMAN whom thou gavest to be with me, SHE gave me of the Tree, and I did eat **, was *Adam's* unmanly Impeachment of his tender *Helpmeet*: Nor was *Eve* backward in the like Arts of *Self-Exculpation*; *The*

SERPENT

* Gen. III. 12.

SERPENT *beguiled me, and I did eat*, was her prompt Reply to her Maker.* This Crime was the bitter Poison infused by that evil Spirit who is *emphatically styled The Accuser*†. And as this *Despiser* of Dominions, and Calumniator of Dignities, is said, by his restless Treasons and Rebellion, to have interrupted the Peace of Heaven itself, he was no sooner expelled, with his mutinous Adherents, from the Regions of Bliss, but he set his devilish Engines at Work afresh; and by his fatal Arts introduced Confusion, and every evil Work into these nether Worlds. And it was upon the great *Destroyer's* breaking in upon this Part of the Creation, that made the *heavenly Voice* so pathetically condole the Sons of this inferior Creation: *Wo to the Inhabitants of the Earth, and of the Sea, for the Devil is come down unto you, having great Wrath, because he knoweth he hath but a short Time*‡. And what use the invincible Enemy of God and his newly created Favourite, made of the fatal Opportunity put into his Hand, his ruinous Attacks upon the human Pair, with the Evils consequent upon their Seduction, too sadly proclaim.

Before we advance any farther in our Enquiry, from whence, or from whom *Evil* at first crept into the Works of infinite Wisdom, it may not be altogether impertinent to our Subject, to take a previous View of that State of

* Gen. III. 13.

† Apocal. XII. 12.

‡ Ὀλίγον καιρὸν.

of God's Creatures (Angels as well as Men) in which, as it is most highly reasonable to suppose, the Creator originally placed them.

Let the original State of Man be the first Part of this Enquiry: And this being done, we may extend our View to the original State of the fallen Angels, as far as Revelation and a modest Exercise of human Reason will conduct us with Safety: And when these interesting Points are a little cleared, unprejudiced Reason will, I hope, admit that the *Origin* of *Evil* was owing to the Perverseness of some of God's Creatures, and by no Means chargeable, as some little Cavillers assert, upon the divine Being: God certainly sow'd nothing originally in his *great Field*, (the whole Creation) but *good Seed*, and though noxious and evil Weeds have, since the Beginning, sprung up in too great Abundance, it will appear by and by that *it was an * ENEMY that did this*.

First, I am to enquire a little into the original State of Man. The Account which Revelation gives of this important Affair is indeed but short, but it is nevertheless full, clear, and express. We are told in the sacred Oracles that God called this Solar System into Being out of *Nothing*: These are the Words of the inspired Historian; *In the † Beginning*
God

* Matth. XIII. 28.

† We are not, I presume from hence to infer, that this Solar System (or indeed any Thing else) was coeval with the Deity; nor does this Expression *in the Beginning*

God CREATED *the Heaven and the Earth*; and I apprehend that we cannot, with any philosophic Accuracy, affix any lower Sense upon the Word *create* than calling a Thing into Being, which before had no Existence in Nature. And when this earthly Ball was cast * out of the Hand of the great Creator into the wide Expanse, when it was rendered fructiferous by the enlivening Beams of its great Attractor the Sun, when this terrestrial Paradise was array'd in all its Virgin Glories, decked with every Ornament of Nature, and surrounded with the spangled Firmament; it was *then*, but not *before*, deemed a fit Habitation for Man, into whose Nostrils, when formed, the great Father of Spirits breathed a Spark of his own divine Nature, *and Man became a living or IMMORTAL Soul*. And after the Almighty had so highly distinguished his earthly Favourite, by creating him after his own Divine Image, he put him into ample Possession (one single Object excepted) of every created Good; not to mention the familiar Intercourse betwixt Man, while he retain'd his Innocence, and *un-created* Excellence. Nor did the Almighty lay so much as one single Injunction or Restriction upon Man, but only not to fling himself, and the glorious Privileges he enjoyed, wilfully

ning, signify from Eternity, but that distant Period of Time when this visible System was created; and let this have been done when it would, either ten thousand Years sooner or later, it would have been thus expressed.

* Vid. *Newton de Vi Project. &c.*

wilfully away. The only Thing God requir'd from *Adam*, in Return for that vast Profusion of Bliss bestowed upon him, was no more than not to meddle with a *certain* interdicted Object in the middle of the Garden. * And sure, the least that *Adam* could have done was religiously to refrain from the Enjoyment of *one* Object, when he was so liberally allowed to taste of every other Paradisaical Pleasure. Neither was this Prohibition, as we have already observed, in any Degree rigorous and arbitrary, but both highly reasonable in itself, and for the *best Interest* of *Adam* punctually to observe it. That this first and *sole* Injunction laid upon *Adam* was in itself highly reasonable, it would be sufficient, to the pious Reader, to say, that infinite Wisdom and Infinite Goodness gave Man that Command to refrain from one certain Object, which would hardly have been done but for *particular* Reasons, though we cannot at present precisely guess what those Reasons might be. But however, there seems to be one obvious Reason for laying

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* Whether this Situation of the interdicted Object will support that Opinion of this Object's being the Sun, I leave to the Determination of the Admirers of Mr. *Hutchinson*. The Sun, it is true, is placed in the Center of this Mundane System, and might, in Process of Time, bid the fairest of any of God's Handy-works to be idoliz'd; but whether it is at all probable that *ADAM* should run into this blind Superstition, or that the interdicted Object was the Sun, because this Object was placed in the Center of Paradise, I should be very backward in asserting.

ing this Injunction upon the great Progenitor of Mankind, that from thence he might reasonably infer, that all those *eminent* Gifts and Privileges which he enjoy'd, were not, strictly speaking, his own absolute Property, but the gracious Bounties of his Sovereign Benefactor: And this Injunction would likewise be to *Adam* as a Test of his Obedience, and would inspire him from Time to Time with Sentiments of Humility, and Gratitude to the beneficent Author of his Being, and of his Happiness. But here I am aware it may be said, that this Injunction to *Adam*, did not answer these two Ends, forasmuch as he soon broke through the Restraint laid upon him: Very true, so he did; but was this the Fault of Him who gave the Injunction, or of Man that wilfully broke it? Had indeed the Almighty laid more Restraints upon Man in a State of *Innocence*, and shackled down his new-formed Creature with an endless Crowd of positive Institutes, it would have been a manifest Absurdity, and might then have carried the Appearance of great Rigor, not to say Tyranny; but had he laid upon original Man none at *all*, *Adam*, in Process of Time, might have forgotten from *whence* he received, and under *whom* he held, as in Trust, his earthly Dominion: His Heart, in the Language of the eastern Patriarch, might have been secretly enticed, and his Mouth might have kissed his Hand, as if his own Arm had gotten him all those Bounties

ties he enjoy'd; in which Case, he would have lied * in the Face of the most high God. This Forgetfulness and Contempt of God, would have swelled *Adam* with Pride and Vain-glory, and cast him headlong into the Snare and Condemnation of the Devil: In this Case *Adam* would, like the other, have fallen *self-tempted*; upon which Account his Recovery would have been very precarious, not to say absolutely impossible. And therefore, infinite Goodness used every possible Remedy, consistent with Man's free Agency, to caution *Adam* against Pride and Self-sufficiency: And lest Man should look upon himself as a true Native of Paradise, he was not originally formed *in*, but *without* the Garden of *Eden*, as is plain from *Gen. II. 7, 8.* This was a sufficient Caution given to Original Man, not to look upon that delightful Abode as his own by natural Right, but as the free Gift and Donation of his divine Benefactor†. So that the *Giving*, as well as the Religious *Keeping* of that Injunction, not to meddle with the *Tree of Knowledge*, &c. was for the best Interest of *Adam*. But however, lest *Adam* should make light of this single Prohibition, he is expressly threatened, in the *Eden* Covenant, with the most alarming Punishment, if he dared to transgress that Command of his Maker. Who then, that

F f 2 beholds

* ψυλ αμνν ιναντιον Κυριου του ψψιου. Job XXXI. 28.

† *Adam formatus fuit extra Paradisum, ut ostendatur eum Locum non deberi sibi ex Natura, sed ex Gratia.*
 SYN. CRIT.

beholds original Man thus happily placed, surrounded with such sweet Variety of every Good his Imagination could suggest, and withal so solemnly cautioned not to fling himself away, would ever expect to hear of his being dispossess'd of his new-erected Empire? Much less would any Man surmise that some Evil or *Moral* Disorder should ever gain a Foot in that delightful Region, where Duty and Interest were always the *same*; both alike conspiring to make the Lord of this earthly Globe perfectly happy. And above all, what Man can, without the most impious Assurance, impeach the Goodness of Heaven, in Case any Evil, Moral or Physical, should creep into this Part of the Creation? But yet that this was the Case, and God knows very soon too, after Man was placed in his paradisaical Kingdom, will appear as we farther advance in our Inquiry.

THE Account which the *Mosaic* History gives of the Origin of *Evil* in this nether Creation, is (according to the general Custom of the Eastern Nations) delivered under an * Allegory, or Figure of Speech, which represents one Thing by some other that hath a near, or distant Resemblance to the Thing intended. Thus in the *Mosaic* History of the Fall, the Tempter is introduced under the Similitude of a natural Serpent. † *Now the Serpent was*

more

* *Allegoria est Mutatio, vel Figura qua aliud dicitur, aliud significatur.*

† Gen. III. 1.

more subtle than any Beast of the Field which the Lord God had made, and he said unto the Woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every Tree of the Garden? This impious Inquiry of the Tempter, Eve unguardedly resolves; and not only acquaints the Devil in general Terms, that something was forbidden to the human Pair, but tells him *what*, and *where* that very interdicted Object was: And the Woman said, We may eat of the Fruit of the Trees of the Garden, but of the Fruit of the Tree which is in the Midst of the Garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, (neither shall ye touch it*) lest ye die. This was the very Secret the Tempter wanted most to know. For notwithstanding he might possibly have heard a Rumour that God had laid some sort of Restraint upon his earthly Probationers, and had withal learnt out some Particulars relating to the State of Man, the new Delegate of this lower World, yet it is evident from his *Quere* to the Woman, that he was ignorant both *what* and *where* the Thing forbidden was. And no sooner had our unguarded Mother acquainted

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* These are Words of *Eve's* own Invention: God had said no such Thing in express Terms, whatever might be imply'd in the Words of the Prohibition. And our unhappy Mother, by foisting them into the Dialogue with the Tempter, seems as if she wanted to make the Prohibition appear extremely rigorous: It looks as if *Eve* was then a little shaken in her Love and Fidelity to her God, and afforded the first sad Instance, that when the *Fair* begin to parley, they are half overcome, and near a Surrender. *Virtus quæ facilem PRAYO præbet aurem, non ægre cedit.*

the Tempter what the interdicted *Object* was; but he *sneers* at the Prohibition, * and assures the Woman, that the forbidden Fruit would be so far from bringing *Death*, or any other *Evil* upon *Adam* or his Consort, that by its miraculous Virtue, the human Pair would be deified in a Moment. These are his Words; *Ye shall not SURELY die*: For God doth know, that *in the Day that ye eat thereof, ye shall be as Gods, knowing GOOD and EVIL*. And such a fatal enchanting Sound had these Words in the Ears of *Eve*, that she either wanted Power or Discretion to resist the Snare laid on Purpose to wheedle and undo her. For it is recorded, that when the Mother of † Mankind saw the Tree, that it was good for Food, and a Tree to be desired to make one WISE; she took of the Fruit thereof and did eat, and gave also unto her Husband with her, and he did eat ‡. Dreadful Curiosity! and ten Millions of Worlds would

* *Yea, hath God said, &c.* Gen. iii. 1.

† Gen. iii.

‡ The British Poet has not, I think, a more moving Picture throughout his immortal Poem, than that which exhibits this tragical Event. He represents all Nature as frighten'd and convulsed at the Rashness of *Eve*; and when *Adam* repeated the Crime of his deluded Consort, Nature was again in Pangs:

*Earth felt the Wound, and Nature from her Seat,
Sighing, thro' all her Works, gave Sign of Woe,
That all was lost:—*

*Earth trembled from her Entrails, as again
In Pangs, and Nature gave a second Groan:
Sky low'r'd, and muttering Thunder some sad Drops
Wept at completing of the mortal Sin
Original!*

Par. Lost. B. IX.

would the human Pair have given, had they remained as God sent them out of his Hands, innocent and happy. They were now too well convinced, that Obedience to the divine Laws was the most *exalted* Wisdom, and to know how to be happy, the Perfection of *Science*. They found by sad Experience, that a *vain* Affectation of false Science, had bereav'd them of true Wisdom; and that a fatal Curiosity of knowing what did not belong to the human Species, had deprived them of sound Reason; and by proudly aspiring to be equal with God, they almost sunk themselves down to the same groveling Level with the Brute Creation. However, we learn from this Piece of sacred History, from what quarter *Evil* first crept into these nether Handy-works of God, *viz.* from Him who was *a Murderer from the Beginning*, and to this very Hour *is walking about, seeking whom he can next devour*. But as our *Inquiry* into the *Origin of Evil*, has hitherto gone no farther than that inauspicious *Day* when it entered amongst the human Species, we must extend our View much higher, if we would investigate the true Author and Cause of moral Disorder amongst those superior Beings, the Angels of Light. But previous to this arduous Inquiry we are just to consider the original State of those heavenly Spirits. Now that all God's *intelligent* Creatures were originally in a State of Purity, Innocence and Happiness, will, I presume, hardly be debated; how therefore

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they came, *any* of them, to lose their original Purity, must naturally excite both our Pity and Astonishment. How Man forfeited his Faith and Allegiance in God, and by *whom* he was seduced to fling himself, and the noble Privileges he enjoyed, so shamefully away, is a Secret to none, that are acquainted with the sacred Oracles; but from *whence*, or by *whom*, those more perfect, or at least more intelligent Beings, the Angels of Light, were prompted to thwart the Will of infinite Wisdom and Power, is perhaps as far above the Reach of human Reason to determine with Certainty, as are those pure lofty Regions from whence they fell, above the Ken of mortal Eyes. And as this mysterious Subject is so difficult to fathom, so the Rebellion of the fallen Angels could hardly gain Credit at all, were it not more than once plainly pointed out in the sacred Code. In St. Jude we have these Words, *The Angels which kept not their first Estate, or Principality*, but left their own Habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting Chains under Darknes, unto the Judgment of the GREAT DAY.* This Passage, unless I greatly mistake, affords a plain Intimation that one Crime of the fallen Angels was Discontent: For notwithstanding divine Goodness had so highly exalted those mutinous Spirits in Power, Dignity

* This Construction of *αρχη* has received no small Reputation from its having been lately adopted by a very worthy and learned Prelate in a Treatise well known by Men of Reading.

Dignity and Happiness, they seem not to have been satisfied with that glorious Station in which they were originally placed: For that the reprobate Spirits were once very highly exalted in Power and Dominion, is not a little confirmed by the Word the inspired Penman makes use of in the Passage just cited. For, according to the Opinion of many judicious Commentators* as well as Etymologists, *αρχή* not only signifies the original or first Estate of a Being, but its Power, Dignity and Exaltation. As therefore the reprobate Spirits were placed in such a high State of Glory, Power and Happiness, and had it likewise sufficiently in their Power to preserve that glorious Rank in which infinite Goodness had placed them, it is almost above our Belief, that any thing could possibly tempt them to forfeit their original Happiness and Dominion: But that this was the Case, and that *Evil* did break out amongst the Angels of Light, before it crept into this Part of the

* *Αρχή*, idem sonat ac Imperium, Magisterium, Præsidatus: & (as applied to the original State of the fallen Angels) *originalem suam excellentiam, Statum, Gratiam, et Dominium inter Res omnes CORPOREAS in Cælo et in Terra.*
(Vid. Syn. Crit. in loc.)

Possunt & aliter Principium interpretari, non ab re tamen: nam in Græco principii vocabulum, quod est *Αρχή*, non tantum ORDINATIVUM, sed et POTESTATIVUM capit principatum. Unde et *Αρχοντες* dicunt Principes et Magistratus. Ergo secundum hanc quoque Significationem, Principium pro Principatu et Potestate sumetur. In Principatu enim et Potestate Deus fecit Cælum et Terram.

TERTULL. adversus HERMOG. p. 123.

the Creation, is, I believe, on all Hands allowed. For, that *one* of these rebellious Spirits soon spread the Infection throughout the Solar System, the Seduction of *Adam*, and the sad Effects of that tragical Event do, *to this very Hour*, too evidently proclaim. As to the first Author, *who* and *what* he was, Revelation has plainly enough pointed out. And I humbly apprehend, it will be of no Disservice to Christianity, as it will afford us several important Cautions with Regard to our *own* Conduct, to inquire what that *Crime* of the fallen Angels was, which provoked the Almighty to expel them out of the Regions of Glory. *Justin Martyr*, *Tertullian*, and some other Christian Fathers, just emerged out of Pagan Errors, were of Opinion, that the first Sin of the fallen Angels was Impurity and Uncleaness; and in support of this *odd* Conceit, they refer to that memorable Passage. *The * Sons of God saw the Daughters of Men, that they were fair, and they took them Wives of all which they chose:* But to apply this tragical Piece of sacred History to the fallen Angels, is neither consistent with Scripture, † nor sound Philosophy. For to affirm, that the Crime of the fallen Angels was Impurity with the Daughters of Men, is founded in this mistaken Principle, that those Angels have Bodies of material Substance, similar to the human Species: Whereas they

* Gen. vi. 1, 2.

† See *Tremendous Sanction*, Book I. Sect. V.

they are on all Hands allowed to be Spirits; and if so, they are not only invifible at present to mortal Sight, but, as I imagine, incapable of that Act of Impurity, with which they are charged. Befides, this Opinion of *Justin Martyr* and *Tertullian* is founded upon a false Construction of the Passage juft cited, that by *Sons of God*, Angels are to be underftood; whereas it is evident to a Demonftration, that by the *Sons of God* we are to underftand the Descendants of *Adam* in the Houfe of *Seth*; who, notwithstanding their other Crimes, ftill kept aloof from the Hellifh Sin of Idolatry, and ever continued to acknowledge and adore the ONE LORD GOD. And the facred Historian gives the Descendants of *Adam* in the *Line of Seth* this eminent Title, of *Worshippers of Jehovah*, to diftinguifh them from the Offspring of *Cain*, who had no Remains of Religious Worship, but had entirely caft off their Dependence on the true God, and were utter *Aliens* from the Commonwealth of Heaven. And the Abfurdity of the foregoing Opinion appears in a ftronger Light from that *ftange* Suppofition, that the Angels did not fin till *after* the Fall of Man, whereas it is as plain as facred History can make it, that the Angels had *left their firft Eftate*, before Man was created; nay, it was one of thefe mutinous Angels, that feduc'd the human Pair, and unhappily drew them into his own dark Crimes of Pride and Rebellion. Nor can any
 Thing

Thing apologize for this ridiculous Notion of the Fathers, but the gross Errors of *that* Religion in which these good Men had most of them been trained up from their Infancy: Neither indeed could they, *humanly speaking*, conquer the stubborn Prejudice of Education, and get the better of the Errors of Paganism all at *once*. But one Thing however should always be remembered to the Honour of these venerable Writers, that they have left behind them some noble Defences of Christianity; the *Truth* of it, many of them sealed with their Blood; and if they maintained *some Tenets* that were wrong, it only proves them not *Angels* but Men, and as such fallible in some Particulars, though right in others. Nor need any Man, ever so slenderly acquainted with Paganism and the gross Ideas it taught its Votaries of the Deity, wonder, that Men but just emerged out of the stinking Mud of Ignorance and Superstition, should still retain some low Notions of Angels and Spirits. The Heathens clad the Gods *themselves* with Bodies of Flesh and Blood; and therefore none need be surpris'd if they thought Angels Beings of material Substance. In short, the heathen World had little or no Ideas of Spirituality before the Publication of the Gospel: And even amongst the *selected People*, a numerous * Sect denied the very Existence of Angels and Spirits; and when

* The Sadducees, see Acts xxiii. 8.

when this is considered, the Mistakes of the Fathers concerning the Crime of the fallen Angels, as well as many others which are so frequently interwoven in their Writings, ought rather to excite our Pity, than our Surprise. And here I cannot forbear reflecting that those *over-zealous* Advocates of the Fathers do the Cause of Christianity very manifest Disservice, by ranking their Writings almost upon the *same* Level with those of the Apostles, and looking upon the Tenets of a *Tertullian* or *St Cyprian* as of *equal* Authority with the inspired Epistles of the great *St Paul*. But sure it is taking a very unjust *Picture* of our most holy Religion, to view it as drawn by the Pencil of a *Pagan* Convert: For these Men, allowing them to be (as I verily believe most of them were) Persons of ever so much Sincerity and Judgement, yet considering the Errors of that Religion in which they had received the * *first Impressions*, they could not, humanly speaking, help retaining a little *Spice* of Pagan Superstition. If we would have the Truth *only*, and the *genuine* Doctrine of that Religion which is founded upon it, we must search the Scriptures; *there, and there only*, we shall be sure to find it pure and uncorrupted with human Inventions, because every Thing contained in the sacred Writings was dictated by a di-

* Quo semel est imbuta recens, servabit Odorem
Testa diu.

HORAT. Epist. Lib. I.

vine infallible Guide, which cannot err nor deceive.

But to return to our Inquiry into the first Sin of the fallen Angels: This Sin, as we have just shewn, could not be the Act of Impurity with the human Species: Neither was it (as some have maintained) *Envy* that was the *first* Crime of the rebellious Angels, as will be shewn by and by: In the mean Time let it be noticed, that various have been the Opinions of inquisitive Men concerning the Objects of this Envy in the reprobate Spirits. Some have thought this Envy of the Evil Spirits was levelled against original Man, whom the Creator had invested with full Power and Dominion over every Creature upon the Face of the whole Earth. For these, say they, being more, and greater Privileges than Angels themselves were endued with, the fallen Angels were upon this Account fired with Envy to see an Earth-born Creature invested with regal Power, and Dominion superior to their own: This was the fatal Cause prompting the wicked One to play off every Engine of Mischief and Subtilty, in order to ruin the human Pair, and at once to dispossess the new delegated Lord of the nether World of all his Happiness and Glory. How soon the Tempter succeeded in his fatal Attempt upon *Adam*, we are too well acquainted with: For with such Art and Malice did the evil One, (as he imagined)

gined) play off his ruinous Batteries against original Man, as to thwart, in all Appearance, every End of Man's Creation, had not infinite Power and infinite Goodness interposed in Man's Behalf, and wrought most marvellous Good out of the Evil intended. It is very probable, the Tempter had learnt out, some Way or other, that notwithstanding *Adam* was invested with such high Power and Dominion over every earthly Creature, yet he was only to enjoy his *Eden Empire* so long as he stood firm and unshaken in his Allegiance to the great Lord of Nature, but not one Moment longer: And therefore the Prince of Darkness first encroached upon *Adam's* Right of Dominion over the brute Creation, and by the Means, or Instrumentality of one of those Creatures which belonged to *Adam*, seduced *Adam* to transgress the only Command God had laid upon him, and in so doing *disrobed* the human Pair of Innocence, and consequently of Happiness too. But allowing, that the Seduction of *Adam* was owing to the Tempter's Envy, yet this Act of Envy was by no Means the *first Sin* of the Devil, because this Envy relates only to his tempting Man at the Fall, which was not till after the rebellious Spirits were cast down from Heaven; and it is certain these mutinous Angels were guilty of some other Sin, prior to the Fall of Man, otherwise they would not have been expelled out of Heaven.

Heaven at all. There are other Writers who make Envy the Sin of the grand Seducer before he was expelled out of the Regions of Glory, and are of Opinion the Object of this Envy was the great Anointed of the * Father. This Opinion is chiefly founded upon that Passage in the *Apocalypse*, *There was War in Heaven, Michael and his Angels fought against the DRAGON, and the DRAGON fought, and his Angels.* But this memorable Passage is not in strict Propriety a Narrative of what had already happened, but a Prediction of a future Event. And notwithstanding the Words all run in the * *past* Tense, the Retrospect extends no higher than the Day that *John* was in his Vision in the Isle of *Patmos*. In that Prophetic Vision, *John*, amongst other great Events, was shewn what fearful Conflicts and Persecutions the *Puerpera*, or Church of Christ, should undergo in succeeding Ages by the Power and Cruelty of the *Dragon*, that old *Serpent*, called the *DEVIL* and *SATAN*, which deceiveth the whole World. *Michael*, who subdued this fierce Adversary of the Woman and her Offspring, may denote the *Messiah* as *Principal*, and *Constantine* the Great, as the glorious Instrument in the Hand of Providence, to lift up the Head of the persecuted Christians: And by the

like
* The *British* Poet has adopted this Opinion in his immortal Poem of *Paradise Lost*.

† Καὶ ἐγένετο πόλεμος ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ. Ὁ Μιχαὴλ καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ ἐπολέμησαν. *Apocal.* xii. 7.

like Method of Explication, and Communication of Names to different Persons, by the GREAT DRAGON, we are not only to understand the *Devil*, as the *principal Agent* in the hot Persecutions of the Christian Church, but those inhuman Tyrants *Maxentius*, *Maximinus*, *Lucinius*, &c. by whom these Persecutions were carried on, and to such a Degree of savage Fierceness and brutal Cruelty, as none but *he*, who was a Murderer from the Beginning, could suggest, and *not* put in Execution but Wretches lost to every Feeling of Tenderness and Humanity. However, that *Michael*, or the *Messiah*, was the Object of Satanic Envy, while the rebellious Spirits continued in Heaven, is very highly probable in itself, and upon this Account the Maintainers of it may be right in their Conjectures, though they are a little mistaken as to the *Authority* upon which they would found it. For if by *Michael* we are to understand the *Messiah*, or great Anointed of the Father, it is then more than likely that the *Prince* of Hell could not bear to see him so highly exalted in Glory and Dominion above himself, and every other created Being. Envy is ever a restless tormenting Companion, and when once it had unhappily gained Admittance amongst any of the heavenly Spirits, even the sublimest Joys of the divine Mansions would be all tasteless and insipid to those Sons of Hatred and Discord;

the more so, the more they beheld their Fellow Angels contented and happy. It is an Observation daily verified, that the higher any one is exalted above others, the more likely he is (though ever so undeservedly) to draw upon himself the Envy of all narrow disingenuous Minds: And we may reasonably suppose that Envy would act in a similar Manner amongst the heavenly Spirits, after it had once gained Ground. For when the Adversary of God and Man saw how much the *Messiah* was exalted above him, the *bateful Prospect* would fire him with Envy and Torment: And notwithstanding there is good Grounds to affirm from sacred Authority, that the Devil, before he fell, was one of the first and highest of all the Angelic Spirits, yet forasmuch as he found *Michael* (the *Messiah*) so highly exalted above him, his Folly and Envy knew no Bounds, and because he could not be greater, he debased himself to the lowest Regions of Darknes and Misery: And I cannot help throwing upon this and other interesting Subjects as they occur a practical Remark, that as Envy in the Author of Evil, was one main Cause of his Ruin and Disgrace, it always works the same unhappy Effects in whatever *Bosom* it harbours: For as Pride and Envy cast the mutinous Angels down from the peaceful Habitations of God's House, so we shall never gain Admittance into

into those glorious Mansions, if we cherish in our Bosoms till the Day of Death, the least *Tincture* of Rancour and Spite against our Fellow-Creatures.

As it appears very evident from the foregoing Account of the Reprobate Spirit, that the Messiah was one great Object of Envy, it is by no means improbable, but the same Devilish Crime might, more or less, break out against the great Heavenly *Supreme*: Envy, of all the Passions, is most restless and gnawing, it is blown up into Flames at the odious Sight of every one that is superior to its unhappy *Owner*; but though it be readily allowed that Envy was one of the Devil's Sins, still it was not the *first*; Envy was only a *secondary* Crime, or *one* Sin begotten by *another*. Pride was, and always is, the Forerunner of Envy: Pride, as St *Austin* justly distinguishes, did not follow Envy, but Envy followed Pride: Envy cannot be the *Cause* of Pride, but Pride of Envy.* For had not the evil Spirit been first lifted up with Pride, he had never known its dark Associate, *Envy*. The meek and lowly envy *none*; they are always contented with the Station in which Providence has thought fit to place them; and consequently, neither thirst after higher Honours, nor envy those that already possess them. And had not the Author of Evil been swelled with Pride, he

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would

* St August. Lib. II. *de Genes.*

would have gratefully adored the Hand that had so highly exalted him, instead of vainly aspiring above himself, and affecting a Station which did not belong to his Rank and Nature. And that Pride was both the Crime, and the Downfall of the Evil Spirit; we have the following Testimony from *St Paul*, where giving his young Disciple *Timothy* some Account of the sacred Office, and Qualifications of a Bishop, he has this Remark, that a Bishop must not be a *NOVICE*, lest being lifted up with *Pride*, he fall into the Condemnation, or Sentence of Judgment denounced against the Devil for his Pride and Vain-glory. And as Pride was the Cause of the Devil's Envy, I dare be bold to affirm, upon the Authority just quoted, that Ignorance was originally (as it is to this very Hour) the Cause of Pride. For had not the rebellious Angels been ignorant both of themselves, and of their constant Dependence upon the *Sovereign Lord of Nature*, they would never have dared to provoke the Wrath of *Omnipotence*; and in the very same Sentence where the Apostle cautions a Bishop against *Pride*, he bids him beware of *Ignorance*, as the Cause of it. From whence it is easy to infer, that wilful Ignorance is, in any Man, but especially amongst the venerable *Guardians* of the Church, not only a very great Crime, but, in its Consequences, very dangerous to those who are guilty of it. It is plain, however, that for all the boasted Knowledge

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of the Evil One, he fell through Ignorance; neither does it any where, that I can recollect, appear, that the Devil is characterized for Wisdom and Knowledge, but for Subtily and Circumvention. And if it should be demanded how this Ignorance in the Prince of Hell could be acquired, or whence it came to pass that he and his unhappy Associates should not know their State of Dependence upon Him who reigneth over all, a *King* from the Beginning; it may be replied, that this Ignorance was most certainly of their own contracting: They were, without all Peradventure, originally endued with very high Abilities, and came out of God's Hands in great Perfection of Purity and Science; and if they afterwards wilfully neglected, or misapplied these exalted Endowments, the greater was their Folly and Crime for so doing. Neither was it, I think, any otherwise possible for those Intelligent Spirits to eclipse their high and bright Faculties, but by some very remarkable and gross Abuse of their Spiritual Intellects; and it is not unreasonable to suppose that this contracted Ignorance, or misapplication of Knowledge, was owing to their repeated Neglect of contemplating the Divine Attributes, and glorious Perfectionsof that tremendous Being who inhabiteth *Eternity*: They did not well consider *what God was*. They seem to have forgotten that it was *HE* that was the great Lord of Nature, and constant Upholder of all created Excellence:

lence: This gross Neglect of contemplating the Deity, and his glorious Handy-works, would naturally make them above paying due Reverence, and becoming Homage to Him that sitteth between the Cherubims. For when they had once cast off all Reverence of *Jehovah*, they would then, in high Probability, think of nothing but their own Power and Excellence; this immoderate *Self-complacence*, might beget Pride, *Pride* might prompt them to *self-Adoration*, and *self-Adoration* would of course End in downright Defiance, and open Contempt of the *true* God. And from that *inauspicious* Day, when the fallen Angels neglected to contemplate the Perfections of the *great First Cause*, and in consequence of such Neglect, admired nothing but their own borrowed Excellencies, they might vainly look upon themselves as little, if at all inferior, to the Deity Himself; and even want those Divine Honours to be paid to them, which were due to none but the *one* Lord God. These Divine Honours we know the fallen Angels, after their Expulsion, received from Men, whatever they might do from some of their Fellow-Angels before: They had Idols set up, under great Variety of blasphemous Names, Altars smoking, and Divine Honours offered up at their Shrines by every Nation under Heaven; not even excepting the Descendents of *Adam* in the Line of *Seth*, *before*, as well as in that of *Heber*, *after* the Deluge, who were but

too often infected with the foolish Abominations of their idolatrous Neighbours.

And as we have seen from whom, and from whence, Evil at first crept into the Creation, so we find that Man had no Share (as a Principal) in the Introduction of Moral Evil; upon this Account, I doubt not but Man, repenting, will find Grace: But what will finally be the Lot of those Spiritual Beings who fell *Self-tempted*, does not immediately fall under our Enquiry.

But notwithstanding we have traced the Origin of Evil to its proper Author, yet, it will be expected that I should extend my Enquiry somewhat farther, and shew not only from *whom*, but *why*, or *whence* it came to pass, that Evil was suffered to enter into the Creation at all. I shall the more readily adventure upon this Enquiry, as I hope it will afford a full Vindication of the Divine Oeconomy, for suffering Evil to creep into his Works; forasmuch as he is both willing and able, out of this *Evil* to work the most *marvellous Good*. And let none here object, That this is contrary to the express Command of God, to do Evil that Good may come of it: For who did the Evil? Not God, but some of his Creatures: And after Sin had entered in, God provided an adequate Remedy, with regard to Man I mean; and as to the *first* Father of Sin, as well as to his *Crime*, who

can say that infinite Wisdom, Power, and Goodness will not, one Day, work most adorable Good out of the very Author of Evil himself? However, that any Moral, or even Natural Disorder, should appear in that *Oeconomy* where infinite Wisdom, Power, &c. directed the *Whole*, has afforded Matter of no small Perplexity to Men of Study and Contemplation: It has puzzled alike the Philosopher, the Metaphysician, and the Divine, to reconcile God's Prescience of Contingencies with the Liberty of his Creatures; and the Difficulty is equally the same with respect to Angelical, or Spiritual Beings, as well as to the Human Species. For that these, like Man, were Free Agents, is, I imagine, on all hands agreed: And that they also abused their Liberty, and spread the foul Sin of Rebellion, by wheedling over the first of human Race into their own very Crime, (as to its Kind) is, I think, highly probable. One Motive of the Evil One's Rebellion against God was, (as some have conjectured) to indulge a criminal Curiosity of knowing *whether*, or in what the adorable *First Cause* excelled his own Self-conceived Perfections. The Author of Evil found himself endued with very exalted Powers from the Beginning of his Existence; and as *Adam* was sent out of his great Former's Hand not an Infant, but in full maturity of *Manhood*, so the Angels, from the first Moment of their Existence, found themselves in, what I shall take

take the Licence to call, a State of *Spiritualhood*: And therefore the Author of Sin being so highly exalted in Dignity and Power, and never knowing himself to have been any Thing *less* than what he *first* found he *was*, he might so far work upon himself, as to conclude he was always so from Eternity, or at least, that he was *Self-existent*. This Pride of Opinion might prompt him to dare the Power of God himself: He might want to fathom the Depths of infinite Wisdom, and to know more of the Deity, than could be communicated to any finite Beings. What was Great and Glorious, the Author of Evil sufficiently beheld, both in himself, and in every other Object about him; and it might be over-much Attention to second Causes, that spurred on the *great Apostate* to rebel against divine Omnipotence; fondly imagining, by this bold Experiment, to try whether the great Supreme would resent the impious Curiosity, or, in case he did, whether he had Power sufficient to chastise the proud Opposer of his Sovereign Dominion. If therefore, the foregoing Conjectures, relating to the Crimes of the *Evil One*, and the Motives inducing him to rebel against the Deity, are, by no means improbable; then it may with Propriety be affirmed, that the *Crime* into which the Tempter drew the earthly Probationers, was, in *Kind*, (Praised be God that it was not in Degree) like that which he himself had been guilty of: For the Crime of the

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apostate

apostate Angel, which might at last prompt him to break that Prohibition (whatever it was) which God had laid upon himself and his Associates, was, a certain culpable Desire of prying into Secrets, which did not belong to his Nature, nor, if known, could in the least advance his present Felicity. Good, the grand Apostate knew, because he enjoyed it in a very eminent Degree; but even the greatest *Created* Good, when once become common, grew cheap and unsatisfactory to that aspiring Angel: He was, in all likelihood, for trying the Difference of Things, for knowing what was *not*, as well as what *was* Good, and for diving into a *Science*, which belonged to none but that Omniscient Being, who not only knows what all Things really and essentially are, but how to make a proper Application of such exalted Science. And in like manner, *Adam's* Crime seems very evidently, to have been a blameable Curiosity of prying into Things that did not belong to his *Nature*: For that he was not content with that Portion of Science which his Maker had given him, but wanted to try, by a bold Experiment, what was consequentially Good or Evil to the Trier himself, sacred History very clearly evinceth. But certainly it belongs to the Deity only, to know the real and essential Difference of Things; and I will once be bold to affirm positively, that *none* but the great Fountain of Light can (*suâ Naturâ*) comprehend what is,

or

or what is not Good, Indifferent, or Evil in itself, or only *consequentially* so. *Boni et Mali Cognitionem, nisi Deo revelante, nemo habere potest.* Neither the highest Order of spiritual Beings, nor Man in his original State of Science, had any Knowledge of Things inherent in their own Nature, any otherwise than as it was *derived* from the *First Cause*, or original Fountain of Wisdom. And, I presume, it may be for this Reason, that God's Creatures are culpable, when they either affect to be wise above that which is written; or too curiously pry into Mysteries which *finite* Beings neither do, nor can possibly comprehend. This however, seems to have been the Error, both of original Man, and of the apostate Spirits. And whether *this* was owing to some comparative Imperfection in created Existence, to a mistaken Search after Knowledge, a neglect of Contemplating the Attributes of the great *First Cause*, to the natural Thirst of aspiring still Higher, or to the Impossibility of God's intelligent Creatures being satisfied with any created Good in present Possession; or to what other Cause prompting the Creature, it was owing, that Evil first crept into the Handy-works of infinite Wisdom, I dare not, with Precision, affirm: But were it allowable to say which of the foregoing Causes *that was*, which prompted the *first Apostate* from God to thwart the Commands of his great Upholder, I should think, it was a fond Desire of aspiring after something
he

he did not possess. This thirst of aspiring still Higher and Higher, was not, perhaps, in itself culpable; had not the Apostate both mistaken the *Object*, as well as the *Means* of obtaining that which he seem'd most to want. The only Object of every Thing good and glorious, is God, and the only Means, by which any of his Creatures can *augment* their own Happiness and Glory, is by living in chearful Obedience to his Laws, and conforming, as far as they are capable, to the great *Exemplar* of all, and every Excellence.

And as it is no Trespass upon any Christian Doctrine, to suppose, that all God's intellectual Creatures, Angels as well as Men, were put originally, in a Probationary State; then it will undeniably follow, that *each* Order of Beings had *some* kind of Prohibition laid upon them, as a *Test* of their Obedience, thereby reminding them, that High and Glorious as their Exaltation was, there was *ONE* still Higher than they. And as the first of these Spiritualities who fell, must fall *self-tempted* (otherwise he could not be the first Offender) so after he was expelled from his original State of Power and Dignity, he might, in order to extenuate his own Guilt, impudently pronounce, that God's *earthly* Probationers, as well as the apostate Spirits of Heaven, would act the same ungrateful Part: Nor can any one say, that the Adversary of God, and his *new formed Favourite*, did not urge the Almighty to let him

him make Trial upon *Adam*, (as in the Case of the * *Eastern Sufferer*) out of malicious Hopes, that by the Event, he should have something to plead in Vindication of his own Rebellion; forasmuch, as himself, and his *mutinous Associates*, would be found, (if he succeeded with *Adam*) not the *only* Rank of Beings, that dared to offend against the Majesty of Heaven. It has ever been the *Principle* of *State Delinquents*, not only to rebel themselves, but to use every Stratagem to draw unguarded People into the same Snare, in order to † extenuate the Crime of Rebellion. And that the fallen Angels rebelled against some positive Command, is highly probable; when we reflect, that the most Powerful of these Spiritualities were in Subjection to the great Supreme; and that it is in the adorable *Upholder* of all Things, that Angels as well as Men, hourly live and move, and have their Being. The Deity, undoubtedly, had an indisputable Right, as Lord of every Creature, to lay his Dependents under some kind of Restraint, not (as some injuriously assert) to *Tempt*, but to Try them, by giving them all some easy Prohibition, to be to them *ALL* a perpetual Token of his Supremacy, and a Test of their Obedience to the Father of Spirits. And as all God's intelligent, and as such, accountable Creatures, were laid under some kind of easy Restraint,

* See the Book of *Job*.

† *Defendit Numerus, &c.*

Restraint, for Reasons just mentioned; so they were *all* enabled to stand firm in their Allegiance if they would, but still, not so *arbitrarily* shackled down as not to Judge, Act, and Chuse for themselves, as liked them best. It was abundantly in their Power to stand, and to be eternally happy; *Life*, from the Beginning, was to all God's Creatures the Reward of Obedience, and Death, the Sentence denounced against Sin and Disobedience: It was not *of God*, that all his Creatures should not enjoy *eternal* Happiness; he gave them *all* more than Power sufficient to secure this Happiness, and if, for all this, any of them, either *Self-tempted*, as was the first Sinner, or seduced by the Fraud of another, which was *Adam's* Case, should embrace Death and Misery, before Life and Happiness, *who* or *what* are we to blame, the Creator, or the contracted Ignorance and Perverseness of the Creature? Eternal Glory was the golden Prize held out to *all*, and if *all* will not obtain it, impeach not the Wisdom and Goodness of the Deity, but the Folly and Blindness of those, to whom it was so bounteously offered. And yet, notwithstanding these Things, when seriously weighed, are, to all pious Men, a full Vindication of the divine Proceedure, in suffering Evil to creep into his Handy-works, I am well aware how many Difficulties may be started by Men of a severe, and mathematic turn of Reasoning: In order therefore to remove these Difficulties, which seem

seem to impeach the divine Goodness, Wisdom, &c. for not preventing every Species of Evil from entering into the Creation, I shall be obliged to descend to Particulars, from whence, I hope, it will appear that the principal Difficulties attending this interesting Subject, are chiefly owing to our not being able to comprehend the *whole* Plan of the divine Oeconomy, so as to look to *that* Close of the Scene, when every Thing will shine out in its full and proper Lustre; and all those mysterious Ways of Providence, which human Ignorance is too forward to call *unequal*, will appear to be *Holy*, and *Wise*, and *Just*.

One grand Difficulty attending our Subject, is, to reconcile God's *fore-knowledge* of future Contingencies with the Liberty of his Creatures: For it will be said, that whatever was *actually* fore-known, could not but *happen*, otherwise, how could it be fore-known? And if a Thing could not but *happen*, how could it, with Propriety, be called a *Contingency*, because the very Term implies a Possibility of a Thing's not *happening*? Therefore according to this method of Reasoning, the Origin of Evil was not a Contingency, but an *unavoidable* Act, or Event, otherwise God could not have fore-known it; and that God did fore-know this, as well as every Thing else in Nature, must be admitted, otherwise we pay a sorry Compliment to divine Omniscience. And if this

this be the Case, then it may be * further objected, That the Origin of Evil, or *first Sin*, was not owing to the first Sinner's (the Devil's) Abuse of his Liberty, but to an unavoidable Necessity. Well, give me leave, *in my Turn*, to ask one Question or two myself: What kind of Necessity was this, or, by whom was it imposed? It will not, I think, be said that this Necessity was physically, or (in the very Nature of Things) absolutely unavoidable. Or, should this be said, I suppose the only Argument in support of this Opinion, is, because God foresaw that some of his Creatures *would abuse* that Liberty with which they were endued: Well, so he did; and so did the Deity also foresee that many of his Creatures *would not abuse* the Liberty with which they were invested, to stand, or to fall: But will it from hence follow, that those which stood, could not, in a strict philosophical Sense, possibly fall? If this were the Case, then God's Goodness ought no more to be impeached on account of those few (for so, I apprehend they comparatively were) who fell, than to be adored on Account of those *Myriads*, which stood

* I have placed this, and every other Difficulty attending our Inquiry, in the strongest point of Light; hoping, (if these Difficulties can be fully obviated) to put an end to those irreverent Reflections concerning the Origin of Evil, which little, saucy Cavillers, are ever forward enough to cast upon the divine Being, for suffering any Moral Disorder to enter into his Handy-works.

stood firm in their Allegiance to the Author of their Being, and of their Happiness. And yet, that it was an Act of the most *admirable* Goodness, to call so many *Millions* out of Nothing, and to communicate everlasting Happiness and Glory to such an infinite Variety of Beings, as could have no Right in *Nature*, either to Existence, or to the least degree of any kind of Felicity, none, who have thought upon this important Subject, can reasonably debate. But possibly it may still be urged, That notwithstanding it was an *Act* of transcendent Goodness in the Deity, to communicate Life and Happiness, with respect to *those* who would answer the wise Ends of their Creation, and not wilfully fling that Happiness away; yet, with respect to *those* who would (as he foresaw) fall from that State of Glory and Happiness in which they were originally placed, the divine Goodness does not stand altogether unimpeach'd. To which I answer, That this Method of Arguing, is taking it actually for granted, that God endued his Creatures with the Liberty of Acting and Choosing for themselves, for no other Reason, but to tempt some of them to abuse that Liberty; whereas, this glorious Boon of Free-Agency was, both in *itself*, one of the nearest Resemblances to the divine Being, and bestowed upon all God's intellectual Creatures, for the wisest and best of Purposes. It is owing to this heavenly Perfection, that the human Species are but one

Degree lower than the Angels, even in this earthly Prison; and perhaps, those human Souls which make a right Use of this high probationary Gift, while struggling in a Dungeon of Clay, will, for their Reward, be advanced as high (if not higher) in future Glory, as the very highest Order of *unimbodyed* Spirits: For if the highest of these Spiritualities are degraded beneath the present Level of the human Species, for the *Abuse* of Liberty, may it not, from * Analogy, or Parity of Reason, be inferred, that those of the human Species who make a right Use of their Liberty, will be exalted to the same, if not to a higher State of Dignity, than that from whence the others unhappily fell? And as to those heavenly Spirits which hitherto have, and shall still continue to make a discreet Use of that God-like Attribute of Free-Agency, they will, in very great Probability, periodically arrive (and to all eternal Ages) to still higher and higher degrees of Happiness, Glory and Perfection, till in process of Time, they will as far transcend that State in which they were first created, as the

* The Reader has already seen, that this has been the Method of Reasoning in the whole Progress of our Debate, relating to the Doctrine of Future Torments; a Method of Arguing, which when supported by such a train of Historical Facts, as cannot be denied, without utterly destroying all human Evidence, I thought would, to many, be more convincing, than any Proofs drawn merely from those Scripture Passages where this Doctrine is revealed.

the greatest given * Number multiplied by itself, Ten thousand, Ten million of Times exceeds Unity. And as this will be the Case with all God's accountable Creatures, which make a right Use of their Liberty, as they will, to the End of Time, be aspiring higher in Glory, and approaching nearer and nearer to the Perfections of the great adorable first Cause, what a stupendous Idea does this afford, of those ineffable Joys, which are laid up in Store for all probationary Creatures, whether Angels or Men, as shall make a discreet Use of Free-Agency. Can any Thing in all Nature lift a Man so far above every gross and sensual Object, as this rapturous Thought, that he *may* one Day be as far superior to the highest Order of Angels, in the State they are at present, as these celestial Spirits are now to Men, while groveling in the Dust, under the cumbersome

H h 2

Load

* Let this be only supposed to be the following Figures, 990000900999999, ninety-nine Billions, ninety-nine Millions, ninety-nine Thousand, nine Hundred and Ninety-nine) multiplied by themselves the same Number of Times, and it would, I presume, not be in the Power of Numbers to ascertain that amazing Degree of Glory and Happiness, which will be the certain Reward of a steady Perseverance in the right Use of Free-Agency: Well then might the enraptured Apostle want Words to describe the Joys of Paradise, and content himself with only saying what these sublime Joys are not, such as, "Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither have entered into the Heart of Man, the Things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

1 Ep. Cor. chap. ii. 9. Isa. lxiv. ii.

Load of Mortality? How ought the Consider-
 ation of approaching still nearer and nearer,
 (even to Eternity) to the Glory and Simili-
 tude of the *Adorable Deity*, to invite every
 rational Creature to be a *Candidate* for such
 an exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory?
 These are the ineffable Joys of Futurity; and
 those probationary Brings who shall be deem-
 ed unworthy to *inherit them*, are perhaps, in
 Number, no more to *those* who shall be
 esteemed proper Objects of endless *increasing*
 Glory, than the *least perceptible Atom* to the
 whole Mass of Matter throughout the vast Ex-
 tent of unbounded Space. I know the pious
 Reader will not be displeased to see my *Hypo-*
thesis of Eternal increasing Glory confirmed
 by so great an Authority as that of *Paul of*
Tarsus; for he represents the Glory of the
 Blessed, not as Eternal in *Duration* only, but
 as eternally Increasing in *Degree*, his Words are
αἰώνιον ἥχος δόξης, and not *ἥχος δόξης αἰώνιον*.
 Neither can Gentlemen of the most Severe and
 Mathematic turn of Argumentation, reasonably
 object to my Opinion of God's Creatures ap-
 proaching to all Eternity, nearer in Similitude
 and Glory to their adorable Supreme, as a
 mere *visionary Hypothesis*, which hath no
 Foundation in Nature. They know it can be
 demonstrated, that there are two Lines (the
 Assymptotes of an Hyperbola) which continu-
 ally approach nearer and nearer to *their Curve*,
 but yet, they can never meet *it*, though ex-
 tended

tended *ad infinitum*. I know it may be said this Illustration or Comparison, is not quite Philosophical, because, notwithstanding Angels, and the Spirits of the *Blessed*, are eternally aspiring to higher Degrees of Glory, and approaching still nearer and nearer to the Perfection of the Deity, still God, who is the great *Punctum Stans*, can neither possibly move and descend, nor (like the hyperbolic Lines) extend or aspire beyond that Infinitude of Glory, &c. of which he ever hath, and will be eternally possessed: This I very freely grant, and this is the very Thing that strengthens my Hypothesis of an eternal increasing Happiness, forasmuch as it clearly demonstrates both the Possibility of created Beings approaching to all Eternity nearer to the Deity, and withal the absolute Impossibility of their ever arriving to the infinite Perfections of the Great Supreme. But as we have shewn that all these Probationary Beings, of whatsoever Rank or Nature, as shall not finally and perversely abuse their Liberty, will be eternally arriving to such superlative Heights of Glory, as almost literally to apply to them that *high Title*, antiently given to such as sat in the Seat of Judgment, *I have said* (or * decreed) *ye are Gods*: And, as it is most highly probable that the Number of those

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* *Decevi, statui, solemniter promulgavi, et in publica Magistratum inauguratione, Authoritatisque data confirmatione ego dignatus sum vos Mea Appellatione.*
Vid. Syn. Criticar. in Loc. et apud Exod. xxii. 28.

accountable Creatures, who shall *not* be deemed worthy to inherit eternal Glory, is very minute to those infinite Myriads of Beings, whom infinite Goodness has called into Existence, in order to communicate to them a Felicity, infinite both in Duration and Degree; when, I say, these Considerations are taken into our Argument, what grateful ingenuous Mind will not sooner adore than impeach the Goodness of the Deity, for his transcendent Benevolence in creating such an Infinitude of Beings, for putting it abundantly in the Power of them all to be eternally happy, happy above Description, and beyond the highest Imagination? So that I apprehend the Difficulty of reconciling God's Prescience of future Contingencies with the Liberty of his Creatures, is in some Measure obviated when we call to Mind the *vast*, the incomprehensible Difference betwixt the *Good* and the *Evil*, the Happiness and the Misery, resulting from the Act of Creation, and investing the various Beings created with the *adorable* Privilege of Free-Agency: And for the final and perverse *Abuse* of which God-like Attribute, so *few* will be eternally Miserable, and for the *right* Use whereof, infinite Worlds of different Ranks of intelligent Beings, will be rewarded with a Glory *eternally* increasing: Beings, who could not possibly claim any Right to Creation, nor when created, have been either accountable Creatures, or in any supposable rational Sense, proper Objects either of God's

Approbation

Approbation or Displeasure. But I am well
 aware, it may be said, that what I have now
 advanced, is rather a Vindication of the Divine
 Goodness, in a strict metaphysic Sense, than a
 clear Reconcilement of God's Prescience of fu-
 ture Contingencies with the Liberty of his
 Creatures: Very well, this is all that I expect
 from the Gentlemen I have to deal with; and
 I very freely confess it is as much as I desire;
 for after the Goodness of the Deity is once
 fully absolved in the *Origin of Evil*, I am in
 no sort of Pain for the *rest* of the Divine Attri-
 butes: As to infinite Wisdom, it fairly im-
 ports an Impossibility of erring, though its
 Ways may appear dark and intricate, till the
 final Elucidation of the whole Plan. And with
 respect to God's Prescience of the *Origin of*
Evil, it can never be justly accused after his
 Goodness is acquitted. For, notwithstanding
 it may still be objected, that God's Fore-know-
 ledge of future Contingencies, renders these
 Things not *Contingencies*, but *unavoidable*
Facts, and consequently utterly destroys the
 Liberty of the Agent; yet, granting this, it
 by no Means follows that these Things hap-
 pened because they were *foreknown*, but they
 were foreknown, because they would *happen*;
 but then they did not happen through any kind
 of physical Necessity, laid upon the Agent
 as a *Restraint* of his Liberty, but through his
 own careless Abuse of it: God's Prescience of
 Evil was not what Logicians call the *Causa*

Consequence, or efficient Cause of that Evil; and, unless those Men, who so impudently arraign the divine Being on account of the *Origin of Evil*, can show that God's Prescience was actually the Cause efficient of it; this stale Controversy concerning the Difficulty of reconciling the Prescience of future Actions with the Liberty of the Agents, ought to be hissed out of the World, as impious on *one* Side, and trifling on the *other*. But still, to shew how greatly desirous I am to make every reasonable Concession, in order to bring to an amicable Issue, a Debate, which has for so many Ages been carried on with all the Parade of Learning, and Heat of metaphysic Frenzy, I will allow that God's certain Fore-knowledge of future Events, renders *such* Events not *Contingencies*.

* If divine Prescience did in Fact destroy the Liberty of his Creatures, or were actually the Cause efficient of all their Actions, there would be no such Thing as Merit, or Demerit in any of God's Creatures. In this Case, any Degree of Punishment, whether inflicted by God, or the civil Magistrate, would be the most tyrannical Cruelty, forasmuch as it would be punishing poor sinful Wretches, for what was, by a fatal Necessity laid upon them, out of their Power to forbear doing: In short, if Prescience of future Events is, of itself, the *Cause* of those Events, there is an End of all Distinction, as to the Agent, betwixt Virtue and Vice; neither would there, upon this Supposition, be any Difference betwixt a *Boyle* and a *Hobbes*, a *Gardiner* and a *Chartres*; a Method of Arguing, which I presume few Men will agree to.

gencies, (certain Fore-knowledge and Contingencies being contradictive Terms) but real Acts or Things: Neither am I under the least Concern for giving up the Term Contingency; Disputes of any Sort I am not over-fond of, but a mere War about Words I utterly abhor; such Debates as these have plagued the World long enough in Conscience: Nor can I foresee how shaking our Hands of Contingencies can be any Reflection upon the divine Attributes, nor consequently of the least Service to the other Side of the Controversy, concerning the *Origin of Evil*, till it can be fully demonstrated that God's Prescience of future Events, or Actions, does absolutely destroy the *Liberty* of the Agent. Now this cannot be done, without first proving that Prescience was absolutely and of *itself* the Cause efficient of all such *Actions* and *Events*: And unless those Gentlemen, who so rashly arraign the Deity, on Account of Evil's creeping into the Creation, can do this, even to the greatest degree of *moral* Evidence, common Modesty will bid them be silent in a Debate which, on their Side, is big with Assurance and Impiety.

But it may be still further demanded, that notwithstanding it should be granted that divine Prescience stands absolved from being the Cause *efficient* of the Origin of Evil, yet, Why did not the Deity, who is infinite in Power, prevent Evil from entering into his handy-Works at all? Or, to give this Objection its full

full Weight, Why did God create any Intellectual Beings, whether Angels or Men, unless when created he had * restrained them from Sin or moral Evil? Now in my serious Opinion, this is one of *those Questions* which Folly may always ask, but which it scarce becometh Wisdom to answer: It is like asking, Why the World was not made sooner? A Question which, let God have made the World when he would, human Ignorance might, with the same Propriety, ever ask; but the greatest Portion of human Wisdom could never answer: And in like manner, let God have formed his Creatures ever so high and perfect, it might still be asked, Why did he not make them more perfect and sinless? To the manifest Arrogance implied in this Query, it would, with a modest Reader, be a sufficient Reply, to ask, "What Right the Thing formed, hath to say to Him that formed it, why hast Thou made me thus?" were not this an Argument borrowed from a BOOK, which at this *unhappy Period* of National Infatuation, is held in such impious Contempt? For as to any Scripture Argumentations, be they in themselves ever so powerful, yet their being set down in those *indiscreet* Writings, at once destroys their Force and Reputation.

* This Objection, as it relates to Man, is borrowed from 2 Esdras vii. 46. where the Apocryphal Writer has these Words; — *It had been better nat to have given the Earth unto Adam; or else when it was given him, to have restrained him from sinning.*

Reputation. This then being the well-known
 State of the Matter, a Man is often forced;
 though ever so much against his own private
 Sentiments, to have recourse to such kind of
 Arguments as are perhaps more *ad Homines*,
 than to the Thing in Debate: And for this
 Reason I will adventure to answer the Men who
 put the foregoing Query, in their own Way,
 and tell them, in the first Place, that they had
 no Right in Nature to be created at *all*, much
 less to choose what degree of Perfection should
 fall to Beings of *their* Rank, and least of all
 could they ever have made this *saucy Demand*,
 had not God vouchsafed to call these *very* Men
 into Existence, who make no other Return
 than to kick against the bounteous Hand that
made, nourishes, and hourly upholds them.
 These Men, by virtue of their Existence, do
 or may, for the most part, enjoy more of Hap-
 piness than of Misery in this their probationary
 State, which is alone an acknowledged Bene-
 fit: And they likewise have it in their Option
 and Power to be Heirs of a Happiness hereafter,
 both eternal in Duration, and eternally in-
 creasing in Degree. And were these Hints
 duly attended to, Men, even out of Gratitude
 and common Decency, would be ashamed to
 impeach the Bounty and Wisdom of the Crea-
 tor, for not doing more for his Creatures. Had
 he done more they might still have abused his
 Goodness; or had he done less, they had no
 Right to complain, because even the least of
 God's

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God's Bounties are more than we deserve, and more than he was obliged to bestow. And yet, I am well aware it will still be urged, That the Deity either *could* send all his Creatures out of his Hands in such Perfection of Holiness as to be impeccable, and thereby prevent the *Origin of Evil*, or he *could not*: To which I shall make no Scruple to answer, That he *could not*, consistent with the Liberty of his Creatures. And though it may be said, That I hereby reflect upon God's Omnipotence, with whom, it is said, (and by an Authority too which I shall ever revere) that *ALL Things are possible*: I disclaim the Charge: For notwithstanding Natural Reason, as well as the incontestible Authority just cited, proclaims the Omnipotence of the Deity, *with whom ALL Things are possible*; yet it does not follow from hence, that divine Omnipotence can do *every Thing*, which the visionary Conceits of his Creatures may fondly opine He can do. All Things which are possible, or, *suâ Natura*, within the Reach of Power *to be done*, these the Deity can most *certainly* Effect; and this is the very Sense the original Words (*παντα γὰρ δύναται ἡ παρὰ τὸ ὄν*) will bear, but no higher. It is on all hands agreed, that there are many Things which are, by their *very Nature*, impossible to be done at all, and cannot therefore be Objects even of Omnipotence itself: For which Reason our Ideas of infinite Power must needs be very unphilosophical, when

when we take it for granted it can do every Thing which the most hyperbolical Hypothesis can suggest. There are some Things, or more properly speaking, whimsical Suppositions, the effecting whereof would be a downright Contradiction in Terms. Instances to this Purpose are so many, and have been so often urged, that it would be trifling to repeat them. A Man, even of plain Understanding, sees at once the Impossibility of a Thing's existing and not existing in the same Moment of Time, or of a Person *having*, and yet *not having* any certain Gift, Quality, or Endowment: These therefore being self-evident Contradictions, I may safely venture to affirm upon the Point in hand, that it was a Thing, *sua Natura*, impossible for the Deity to create any Being a *free Agent* and *not a free Agent*: God's Creatures could not be endued with absolute Liberty to act and choose for themselves (which all intelligent probationary Beings certainly were) and at the same Time deprived of it: Neither could the Almighty send any Being out of his Hands both peccable and sinless too: And yet, that God could not do this, is not owing to any want of Power in the *Agent*, but to the palpable Contradiction, and natural Impossibility, attending the *Act*, or Thing to be done, which is not, cannot be an Object of *Power*, notwithstanding that Power is without all debate *strictly* infinite. And when these Things are maturely considered, I shall not, I hope,

I hope, be accused of any Temerity for asserting, that the Deity *could not* create any Order of Beings absolutely impeccable, consistent with the *Liberty* of those Beings. The very *Term*, implies a Possibility of the Creature invested with it, *using* or *abusing* that Liberty, standing, or falling; and where there is any, even the very *least* supposable Possibility of a Creature's sinning, or abusing its Liberty, it is a great Impropriety to call *such* a Being *impeccable*. Absolute Impeccability ought not, nay, it cannot, without something little less than Idolatry, be attributed to any of God's Creatures, be their State of Purity and Holiness ever so *high*. Absolute Holiness and Impeccability belong to none but *Him*, *who chargeth his Angels with * Folly*, and in whose Sight the very Stars are not pure. There is no one Being which, strictly speaking, is Good, (that is, absolutely impeccable) but God only. Neither, as I humbly apprehend, was it in the Power of the Almighty to create any one Being absolutely infallible, impeccable and holy: These are Attributes essential to God only, nor can they be communicated to the Creature, unless we suppose the Deity can create a Being equal to *Himself*; in which Case the Effect would be equal to the Cause, and there would have

* Such undoubtedly is the most exalted Knowledge of the very highest Orders of heavenly Spirits, when compared to the Original Fountain of Wisdom and Purity.

have been a Plurality of all-perfect and infallible Beings; a Notion so big with Absurdity, that to mention it is alone sufficient to confute it.

Thus far, therefore, we have very fairly proved, that God's Omnipotence, as well as his Prescience and Goodness, stands fully absolved in the Abuse of Free-Agency, and the Origin of Evil consequent thereupon: But notwithstanding the Deity hitherto cannot, in any sort, be impeached for his Creatures abusing their Liberty, &c. yet I am a little apprehensive it will be asked, Whether infinite Wisdom stands altogether clear for not so fitly constituting all his Works of Creation, as thereby to prevent every Degree of Evil from entering in amongst them? For it may probably be said, It would have redounded more to the Honour and Wisdom of God, not to have created any Beings at *all*, unless he had first so wisely pre-ordered Matters, as to prevent every Possibility of Evil's creeping into his handy-Works: Excellent Reasoning indeed! Pray how would it have redounded to the Honour and Wisdom of God to have created no Beings at *all*? Or, Who in this case could have adored his Wisdom, or paid him any Honour? Could God have been honoured and adored when there was no one to honour or adore Him? This, however, is a mere trifling Blunder in those Men who have the Confidence to arraign the Conduct of Infinite Wisdom;

dom; and to tax the Author of their Existence with Folly because he did not make them, what it was not in his *Power* to do. For I dare for once take upon me to affirm, That it was beyond the Reach of infinite *Wisdom*, as well as of infinite *Power*, so to constitute his intelligent, probationary Creatures, as to make it absolutely impossible for them to sin at all, without first depriving them of Liberty, and sending them all out of his Hands like so many animated Machines, unable to *choose*, *move*, or *act*, any otherwise than by the Impulse, or Permission of their Maker: But how such necessary Agents as these could, of themselves, have been proper Objects either of Rewards or Punishments, or how they could, in any Propriety of Language, have redounded to the Glory and Wisdom of him that made them, is, I confess, far above my Comprehension. It was the right *use* or *abuse* of that Liberty with which all God's Creatures were invested to stand and be happy, or to fall and be miserable; that made, or could make Obedience a *Virtue*, and Rebellion a *Vice*. Where a Creature could not but obey the Divine Will, his Obedience was no *Merit*; and if he could not but rebel, his Rebellion was, in him, no *Demerit*: So that even infinite Wisdom *itself* could not have prevented the Possibility of Evil's entering in amongst his Creatures, unless he had, as before observed, sent them out of his Hands mere animated Machines; for

I know

I know of no Alternative, but that of tying God up from creating and any Beings at all. But I should be glad to be informed, Whether the Wisdom and Goodness of God does not appear in a more beautiful Light by calling infinite Worlds into Existence, by putting it into the Power of all these various Beings to enjoy Eternal Happiness, and to enjoy it too in the most rational and *pleasing* Way, as being in some Measure of their own Acquisition, than if such Creatures had been so formed, as not to have had it in their Power either to advance the Honour of God by serving Him freely or of being in the least instrumental to their own Felicity? So that upon the Whole of our Enquiry into the *Origin of Evil*, it is evident to a *moral* Demonstration, that the Deity can by no means be arraigned, even supposing his Creatures had any Right to do it, or to say to him, wherefore dost thou This? And though it may be further asked, Why God did not prevent his Creatures from abusing their Liberty, and making a wrong Choice, which, say they, he might have done without depriving them of Liberty, had he so constituted Things, as to have made *Good* always appear *sub forma Boni*, and *EVIL*, *sub forma Mali*. But the Question is, Whether any created Existence could so exactly distinguish the Nature and Essence of Things as to be at all Times infallible? It is, I imagine, absolutely above the Power of any of God's Creatures to

know intuitively, or without Trial and Experience, the real inherent Difference of Things. Nor was the Tempter for once much out in his Guesses, when he intimated, that * *knowing Good and Evil*, (that is, the essential Differences of Things) was a God-like Science. None, in my Opinion, can intuitively know the true essential Difference of Things, but He that made them: Neither can any Being understand the different Properties in every Thing, who does not know all Things: But this would be *Omniscience*, which belongs to none but the eternal Fountain of Knowledge; and which He cannot, I presume, communicate to any other Being. And as the Consideration hereof fully obviates the Difficulty last started, I would beg of those Gentlemen who so boldly impeach the divine Being, for suffering Evil to break out in the Creation, to forbear for the Future, even out of Decency and good Manners, to blame that merciful God, under whose kind upholding Care they live and move, for not doing Things in their very *Nature* absolutely impossible.

There is still behind one other Accusation against the sovereign Lord of Nature, on account of the Origin of Evil, which the little, snarling Adversaries to God, and to right Reason, seem to think unanswerable: For, say these *doughty Disputants*, God must be the Cause of Evil, because, as existing from Eternity, He is the Cause of every Thing in Nature.

* Gen. iii. 5.

ture. Well, under proper Restrictions, so He is the Cause of every Thing; but then this Cause is nothing more or less, than what is called the *Causa sine qua non*: The true Sense whereof is (if I comprehend the Terms rightly) that whatever *That* was, which was the *First* Cause, and of itself eternally existing, must be the Cause of every Thing in Nature. Yet, notwithstanding this Accusation against the Deity, and put too in the strongest Terms I could think of, it only proves what was never denied; it amounts to no more than this self-evident Axiom, That without a Cause there can be no Effect; and that where there is a *Creature*, there must of Necessity be a *Creator*: But, to cast from hence any sort of Reflection upon the Deity, is not only *impious*, but highly *ridiculous*: It is just such kind of Reasoning as that Man's would be deemed, who should have Ignorance enough to affirm, it was *Solomon*, and not the Army of the *Chaldeans*, who threw down the first Temple; for it was *Solomon* who built that stupendous *Edifice*, which had it not been built, it could never have been thrown down. Nay, according to this curious kind of Logic, the Destruction of that *saered Pile*, was primarily owing to God: It was God who raised up *Solomon*, and gave him in Command to *build him an House*; whereas, if God had not made *Solomon*, *Solomon* could not have erected the Temple;

ple; and if the Temple had never been erected, it certainly could never have been thrown down: Excellent Reasoning! which, if admitted, makes very short Work indeed, and by so modestly paying God the Compliment for every Thing his Creatures act, places to the Account of infinite Wisdom such Things as I dare not speak, nor can they be dwelt upon, even in Thought, without the most horrid Strain of mental Blasphemy: And I must beg Pardon of the Reader for taking any Notice of the foregoing Charge against the Deity, which is so very ridiculous, rude and impious, that I would not have set it down, had it not exhibited such a striking Picture of those Men's *Effrontery*, who take upon them to raign the Conduct of unerring Wisdom, and with an Air of self-sufficient Assurance hardly credible, stick not to lay the Origin of Evil at the Door of infinite Goodness, notwithstanding it is evident to the very highest Degree of Demonstration, Subjects of this Nature are capable of, that this moral Disorder was wholly owing to the *Abuse* of Liberty in the *First* Author of Sin.

And upon a careful and impartial Review of this short *Discussion*, it will evidently appear, that all the Accusations against the Deity on Account of the *Origin of Evil*, are, in Fact, either so many ignorant and ungrateful Murmurings against God, for not doing Things

in their very Nature impossible to be done *, or false Complaints, thrown in the Face of infinite Majesty, for doing any Thing at all : That is, God is blamed on the one hand for not doing enough, and even more than Omnipotence itself could do; and on the other, for doing any Thing at all. Men would have God, either to have sent all his Creatures out of his Hands absolutely perfect and impeccable, or else not have created them at all : The first we have proved he could not do, consistent with Free-Agency; and to insist upon his not creating any Beings at all, or his not communicating unspeakable Happiness to Millions of Worlds, because some might abuse their Liberty, would be Arrogance indeed. Is it not owing to the ever-adorable Act of Creation, that Myriads of Creatures are inexpressibly happy, which before could have no Right either to Happiness or Existence? And how do we know but God is every Moment calling vari-

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* Doctor Mead, in his *Essay on Poisons* (Page 6) has the following Remark : “ That the poisonous Juice of the Viper is not made on Purpose to be deadly and destructive to Mankind ; but, that the true Design of it is to perform an Office and Service of so great Moment to the Preservation of the Individual, that without it this Creature could not subsist.” Now, by a like Method of Reasoning, we may conclude, that Free-Agency, or a Possibility of Sinning, was not bestowed upon any of God’s Creatures, on Purpose that they should abuse this Liberty, and pervert it to their own Destruction ; but it was in itself absolutely necessary to the Nature and very *Subsistence* of all Probationary Beings.

ous Ranks of intelligent Beings into some State of Probation, and both has *from* Eternity communicated, and to the end of Time will communicate, eternal Glory to Millions of Worlds? For as we cannot tell but the Inhabitants of some distant System, and unknown Regions, are *this* and *every* Hour passing in Judgment before God, and as a Reward of their right Use of Liberty, while in a probationary State, exalted to some higher Orb; so the Great Creator may be calling other new and different Ranks of intelligent Creatures into Being, and putting it in the Power of them all to enjoy a Happiness eternal in Duration and *eternally increasing*. The very Word *create*, implies much more than my Conjecture; and when it is considered that *Omnipotence* is the Creator, and infinite Space the *Theatre* where this Power is displayed, none will think I have carried the Thought too high. And if that Opinion of the Mathematician * be allowable, who fancied there might be Stars, whose Light, notwithstanding its incredible Swift-ness, had not yet reached the Inhabitants of this Orb, then my Conjectures concerning God's constant Display of Power in some new Act of Creation, are by no Means carried too far. And it is a Fact not to be denied, that several Stars, or, more properly speaking, *Suns*, have within these few Years made their Appearance in the boundless Expanse, which were

* HUYGENS.

were undiscernable to former Ages. And though I readily grant that the Discovery of *some* of these distant Luminaries may have been owing to our great Improvements in Optical Science, and the Help of better Telescopes, yet it can be no Heterodoxy to maintain, that *others* are either such far distant Suns, whose Rays are but just come within our Ken, or such as have been created since the first Existence of this our own Solar System: And be they one or the other, they are still, as so many stupendous Effects of God's marvellous creative Power. And if any Thing can possibly augment a Happiness which is strictly infinite, (as that of the Deity's undoubtedly is) it must be by communicating Happiness to others; and the *more* this Happiness is communicated, the *more* Delight it must afford to Him, whose Benevolence is universal and boundless: And upon Supposition that the Deity hath any greater Complacency in *one* Thing more than *another*, it seems most agreeable to a Person of a generous and benevolent Temper, to imagine, that this Complacency in the divine Mind, is naturally the greatest, when the greatest Numbers of intelligent Creatures are called into Being, and rendered capable of enjoying ineffable and eternal Felicity. And when we seriously reflect what Myriads of Worlds have been, and will to all eternal Ages, be called to the free Possession of Life and Happiness by the creating *Fiat* of the Al-

mighty, what Folly, what Arrogance, and what Narrowness of Thinking would it betray, to tie up the Hands of the Deity from creating any Beings at all, because some one of these might possibly abuse his Liberty, and wheedle over some few of God's Creatures into the Sin of Disobedience; for few, as I trust in divine Mercy, those are who shall be deemed Objects of eternal Wrath, in Comparison of those Millions of Worlds, which in Consequence of the benevolent Act of Creation, now possess, and will eternally enjoy endless increasing Felicity. Let not vain Mortals imagine, that the System which they behold is the *Whole*, or any considerable Part of God's Handy-Works, when, in all Probability, this whole Solar System, is no more than the most diminutive Point to those vast, innumerable Orbs, extended throughout the boundless Track of Space at the commanding Word of God. As to the Works of Creation which fall within our *present* View, great and glorious as they are; yet, when I call to mind that the Creator is as infinite in Benevolence as in Power, I verily believe that they are no more than a mere Cipher or Blank; and, that in Comparison of those infinite unknown Worlds, which were probably created long before God spake the Solar System into Existence, they are only what the inspired Penman emphatically calls *the biding, or obscure Glimpse of God's Power*.
I say,

I say, long before this System of Things was created, for I cannot but think it extremely vain in us to imagine, that the *Mosaic*, or Solar System, was the first World created: I am sure the inspired Historian says no such Thing that I know of. He tells us, that in the Beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth*. But we have already shewn, that the word *Beginning* is not only what *Tertullian* calls *Ordinativum*, but *Potestativum*. And therefore when it is said, in the Beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth, it does not mean that this System was created from Eternity, or that it was the first of God's Handy-Works, but that it was the Work of sovereign Power and Dominion; "In Principatu et Potestate Deus fecit Cælum et Terram†." Not that I mean to tax the sacred Writer with any the least Impropriety for the Terms he uses in his Account of the Creation, because it might very justly be said, in the Beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth; for with respect to the Heaven, (that is the various Luminaries in the Firmament) the Earth and its Inhabitants, it was in the Beginning: And our Notions of the *End*, or Consummation of Things, seem to be as contracted and unphilosophical, as those relating to the *Beginning* thereof. For as our supposing this System to have been created from Eternity, would be making the World coeval with God, so to imagine

* Gen. i. 1. † See the Note, Page 441.

imagine that by the *End*, or Consummation, of mortal Affairs at the last Day, the Almighty will thenceforwards shut Himself up with his Creatures then called into Existence, in a State of eternal Quietism and Inactivity, would be casting an ungenerous Reflection upon infinite Power, and unbounded Benevolence. The word Beginning, as a Scripture Expression, relates only to the first Existence of the Beings there mentioned, whether Angels, Men, &c. nor can the End, or Consummation of Things, at the general Audit, be understood any other wise, than in a limited Sense, as relating to the final Dissolution of *this World*, and the End of Messiah's Kingdom: Then, says the Gentile Preacher, *cometh the E N D*, το τέλος, when he shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father. E N D in this Passage denotes *perfecting* or *finishing* of the great Mediatorial Plan in the Redemption of Man, and final Victory over Sin, Death, and all the *Principalities* * and *Powers* of Darkness. If therefore infinite Goodness and unbounded Benevolence prompted the Deity to communicate Life and Happiness to Millions of Worlds, long before this Solar System was created, who can doubt but the same immutable Goodness and Benevolence will, to all eternal Ages, incessantly call upon divine Omnipotence to give Being and Happiness to some new Rank of Creatures every Moment?

I have

* ὅταν καταργήσῃ πᾶσιν Ἀρχαῖς καὶ ἰσχυρίαι καὶ δυνάμεις.
1 Cor. xv. 24.

I have dwelt a little longer upon God's adorable Goodness in the Act of eternal Creation, as it not only inspires one's Bosom with the grandest and most awful Sentiments of the Deity, but entirely abates the Force of this little, snarling Question, "Why did God create at all, unless he had so constituted Things as for all his Creatures to be happy? Why, all might if they would, and it is probable that those who shall so long persist in the Abuse of Liberty as to be deemed Objects of some endless Punishment, will be (as already observed) no more than a Cipher to those innumerable Worlds, which, in Consequence of the incessant creating Power of God, are called to Life and consummate Glory.

And as we have fully vindicated the Deity, in this *Discussion* on the *Origin of Evil*, and shewn that not any one *single* Attribute can be justly impeached for suffering Evil to creep into the Works of Creation, I flatter myself it may be of some Use to those, into whose Hands it may *accidentally* fall: And if any Thing here advanced should either put an End to our Disputes concerning the *Origin of Evil*, or make Men treat this arduous Subject with more becoming and more reverential Freedom of Enquiry, I shall chearfully undergo that Scorn, Derision, and Infamy, which are the only Recompence a Writer upon the unpopular Side of the Debate is to expect from the Public in general.

The

The Reader may perceive that I have industriously avoided inserting the ridiculous Dreams and fabulous Inventions of the *Pagans*, as well as the impious Tenets of *Marston* the *Spoic*, and *Moses* the *Perſian* Heretic, who maintained that there were Two eternal Beings, *one* the Author of G O O D, the *other* of E V I L. Nor can a ſenſible Man be diſpleaſed, that I have omitted this Trumpery of the Antients, &c. concerning the Cauſe and Origin of Evil, when he is told, that the Accounts which they give of this important Subject, are rather the falſe and wicked Suggestions of the *Evil One*, than any rational Enquiry into the Cauſe and Origin of Evil itſelf. And whether our Method of investigating the *true* Cauſe of moral Evil, is not more rational than thoſe which have hitherto been generally purſued, muſt be left to the Judgment of the Reader. The *Origin of Evil*, he finds, has been traced up, Step by Step, to its proper Author; and true Cauſe: And that he may, at one View, ſee by what Gradations this moral Diſorder may be traced up to its original Source, let him be acquainted, that *Pride* in the firſt Author of Evil, was that Crime which moſt immediately haſtened his Ruin: The Cauſe of Pride was his *Ignorance*, both of himſelf and of the divine Being: This Ignorance was owing to a *Neglect* of contemplating the Attributes of the Great Firſt Cauſe: This Neglect was the Effect of over-much Attention

Attention to *Second Causes*, and *immoderate*
 Self-Complacency: The true Cause of *this*,
 and of all his other Errors, was *some Abuse of*
 Liberty: And this Abuse of Liberty or *Original*
Evil, was owing to the unavoidable Imperfection
 of all created Existence; it being
 (as has been clearly demonstrated in the fore-
 going Pages) absolutely impossible for Omnipotence
 itself to create any one Being *infallible*,
impeccable, and *perfectly* holy. And as the
 Origin of Evil was owing to some unavoidable
 Imperfection in the Creature, and not, as has
 been often impudently asserted, to the all-
 bounteous Creator, is it not amazing, that
 sinful rebellious *Man*, the *only* Being we know
 of, for whose Rebellion a Pardon hath been
 obtained, should, for all this, be the *only* Creature
 that dares to accuse his Maker for that
 very Evil to which Man himself is accessory;
 out of which Evil, the Almighty is nevertheless,
 both willing and able to work the most
adorable Good?



The Author's Distance from the Press occasioned the following

IN the SUMMARY, Page xiii, Line 1, for Democracy,
read Democracy.

- p. 2, l. 10, *del* as much.
p. 4, l. 4, *f.* happen, *r.* happened.
p. 14, l. 6, *f.* divine, *r.* sublime.
p. 15, l. 25, *f.* to, *r.* of.
p. 30, l. 12, *f.* φάλαγγι αὐτῶν, *r.* φυλάσσας αὐτὸν.
p. 32, l. 18, *del* lo.
————— 31, *f.* ἐργάζισθι, *r.* ἐργάζομαι.
p. 44, l. 6, *del* own.
p. 51, l. 1, *f.* have have, *r.* have had.
p. 66, *apud* Note, l. 5, *f.* ἡσυχαστοί, *r.* ἡσυχασίαν.
p. 90, l. 4, *f.* Κέρυ, *r.* Κέρυξ.
————— *apud* Note, l. 1, *f.* διακισσόντες, *r.* διακισσόντες.
————— l. 14, *r.* reckoned inclusively after tenth.
p. 106, l. 10, *f.* though, *r.* therefore.
p. 121, *apud* Note, l. 2, *f.* fior, *r.* five.
————— l. 11, *f.* esse, *r.* esse.
p. 150, *apud* Note, l. 18, *f.* superceded, *r.* superseded.
p. 164, l. 17, after lives, insert this.
————— l. 30, after Arabia, put down ?
p. 165, l. 26, *f.* promise, *r.* promised.
p. 192, l. 11, *f.* thy, *r.* the.
p. 194, l. 20, after Deeds, *r.* though.
p. 214, l. 10, *apud* Note, *r.* of, after sepes Legis.
p. 224, l. 10, before Glory, *r.* though his.
p. 225, l. 3, *f.* Quadrennial, *r.* Quadriennial.
————— l. 31, after conspire, *r.* against.
p. 249, l. 8, after common, *del* it.
p. 265, l. 18, *f.* the, *r.* that.
p. 268, l. 32, after Heart, *r.* of.
p. 280, l. 15, *f.* Restoraton, *r.* Restoration.
p. 282, l. 14, *f.* this, *r.* their. Line 15, *f.* this, *r.* the.
p. 295, *apud* Note, l. 5, *f.* imminit, *r.* imminuit.
p. 344, *apud* Note, l. 2, *f.* left, *r.* right.
p. 345, l. 21, *f.* ἀντιεθέσποντοι, *r.* ἐναντιεθέσποντοι.
————— l. 22, *f.* αἰσίου, *r.* αἰσίου.
p. 369, *apud* Note, *f.* Κυρίον, *r.* Κυρίον.
p. 376, *apud* Note, l. 15, *f.* Threats, *r.* Throats.
p. 379, *apud* Note, *f.* ταμίαι, *r.* ταμίαι.
p. 383, l. 23, *f.* Characteristic, *r.* Characteristic.
p. 400, *apud* Note, l. 13, *f.* quoram, *r.* quorum.
p. 409, l. 29, *f.* Mem, *r.* Men.
p. 435, *apud* Note, *f.* ψευλαμν, *r.* ψευδαμν.
p. 448, *apud* Note, l. 3, *f.* ἔγνωτο πολίμοι, *r.* ἔγνωτο πόλιμοι.
————— l. 4, *f.* Ἀγγιλοι, *r.* Ἀγγιλοι.
p. 449, l. 18, *f.* of it, *r.* of this Opinion.
p. 468, l. 21, *f.* δόκτες, *r.* δόκτες in both Places.

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